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Replies to initial written questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-26

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Security

Session No. : 21

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SB177	3637	TIK Chi-yuen	30	(1) Prison Management
SB178	3638	TIK Chi-yuen	30	(1) Prison Management
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SB180	3640	TIK Chi-yuen	30	(1) Prison Management
SB181	3641	TIK Chi-yuen	30	(1) Prison Management
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SB196	3818	LEUNG Hei, Edward	122	(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
SB197	3660	TIK Chi-yuen	122	(1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
SB198	3748	TIK Chi-yuen	122	(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
SB199	3382	CHAN Hak-kan	70	(2) Control upon Entry
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SB201	3404	CHAN Hak-kan	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB202	3405	CHAN Hak-kan	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
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SB212	3386	CHAN Hak-kan	45	(1) Fire Service
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SB215	3389	CHAN Hak-kan	45	(3) Ambulance Service
SB216	4011	LEE Wai-king, Starry	45	(3) Ambulance Service
SB217	3436	LEUNG Hei, Edward	45	(1) Fire Service (2) Fire Protection and Prevention
SB218	3477	LEUNG Hei, Edward	45	(1) Fire Service
SB219	3478	LEUNG Hei, Edward	45	(2) Fire Protection and Prevention
SB220	3483	LEUNG Hei, Edward	45	(3) Ambulance Service
SB221	3816	LEUNG Hei, Edward	45	(1) Fire Service
SB222	3913	KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian	31	(1) Control and Enforcement
SB223	3727	WONG Chun-sek, Edmund	31	(1) Control and Enforcement
SB224	3728	WONG Chun-sek, Edmund	31	(2) Anti-narcotics Investigation
SB225	3460	LEUNG Hei, Edward	166	(1) Government Flying Service
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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB001

(Question Serial No. 1793)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department receives and handles a large number of non-refoulement claims every year. Regarding the past 3 years, will the Government inform this Council:

1. of the number of claims received and the nationalities concerned;
2. of the number of claims determined and the number of claimants being repatriated;
3. of the number of claims withdrawn;
4. of the number of claims under screening;
5. of the number of claims pending judicial review;
6. of the number of crimes committed by claimants whose claims are under screening, with a breakdown by police district and crime category;
7. of the government expenditures (on legal assistance, accommodation allowance and food assistance etc.) and manpower for handling non-refoulement claimants and the work details;
8. of the average administration fee and legal costs required for handling each case;
9. since rolling out the Advance Passenger Information system in phases from September 2024, of the current number and percentage of airlines participated, and whether the torture claim problem has improved since the implementation of the system ; and
10. of the measures put in place by the Government to combat abuses of the relevant mechanism.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

(1) – (4) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

As at end-February 2025, ImmD received 28 154 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 491
Indonesian	5 361
Indian	4 618
Pakistani	3 251
Bangladeshi	2 546
Filipino	2 259
Nepalese	511
Thai	486
Nigerian	294
Other countries	2 337
Total	28 154

Over the past three years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398
Total	5 500

(5) According to the Judiciary, there were 1 445, 2 087 and 2 418 applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) in 2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively. The Judiciary has all along been adopting a stringent approach in handling leave applications for JR. As at 31 January 2025, among the leave applications to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed from 2022 to 2024, 1 387 cases were disposed of, which leave granted in only 28 cases, representing 2% of the cases disposed of.

(6) According to the Police's record, since 2022 and up to end-2024, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by police region/police district:

Police region/police district	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island Region	158	150	126
Central District	47	36	31
Wan Chai District	73	69	39
Western District	22	19	28
Eastern District	16	26	28
Kowloon East Region	23	41	36
Wong Tai Sin District	5	12	9
Sau Mau Ping District	6	10	14
Kwun Tong District	5	10	6
Tseung Kwan O District	7	9	7
Kowloon West Region	365	386	434
Yau Tsim District	155	192	190
Mong Kok District	65	61	77
Sham Shui Po District	98	94	102
Kowloon City District	47	39	65
New Territories North Region	121	117	143
Border District	2	0	5
Yuen Long District	89	83	101
Tuen Mun District	27	28	28
Tai Po District	3	6	9
New Territories South Region	19	42	45
Tsuen Wan District	8	11	9
Shatin District	1	7	12
Kwai Tsing District	5	14	15
Lantau District	3	8	7
Airport District	2	2	2
Marine Region	1	9	2
Hong Kong overall	687	745	786

Since 2022 and up to end-2024, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2022	2023	2024
Shop theft	145	193	176
Miscellaneous thefts	99	71	96
Wounding and serious assault	51	75	76
Serious drug offences (Note 1)	85	99	63
Disorder/fighting in public places	44	42	48
Criminal damage	25	33	47
Burglary	27	18	27
Serious immigration offences (Note 2)	29	38	24
Others (Note 3)	182	176	229
Total	687	745	786

Note 1: “Serious drug offences” include possession of dangerous drugs exceeding a specified amount (i.e. possession of drugs, such as 5 grams of cocaine/heroin/marijuana, etc.), manufacturing dangerous drugs, trafficking of dangerous drugs, etc.

Note 2: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants (IIs), arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person.

Note 3: “Others” include forgery and coinage, robbery, possession of offensive weapon and pickpocketing etc.

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2022, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2022	454
2023	484
2024	363
2025 (January to February)	48

(7) – (8) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

The Government does not maintain the average administrative cost and expenditure on PFLA involved in handling each case.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	75	35
2024-25	207	81	73^	35
2025-26 (Estimate)	207	81	73^	35

* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

^ Number of members as at 28 February 2025, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2022-23, the non-civil servant posts in the Duty Lawyer Scheme are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	5	6	6
Court Liaison Officer	22	17	32	32
Senior Personal Secretary	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	4	4	6	6
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	1	1	2	2
Total	39	34	53	53

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office since 2022-23 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26
Civil Servant posts				
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	0
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	0
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	0
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	0
Workman II	1	1	1	0

	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26
Non-civil Servant posts				
Number	5	4	0	0
Total	15	14	10[^]	0[^]

[^] PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. Therefore, the Government has since 2024-25 commenced to reduce the number of civil servant and non-civil servant staff in the Pilot Scheme Office.

(9) Since the rollout in phases of the Advance Passenger Information (API) system on 3 September 2024, as at end-February 2025, 86 airline operators have been connected to the system, which accounted for 60% of the overall airline operators, including Hong Kong-based airline operators, such as the Cathay Pacific Airways, the Hong Kong Airlines, the Greater Bay Airlines and the Hong Kong Express Airways, etc. As for the around 60 remaining airline operators, ImmD will continue to maintain close communication with them with a view to ensuring that relevant system connection works will be completed in an orderly manner before 1 September 2025.

In just a few months of operation, the API system has been effective in successfully identifying and denying boarding of flights by ineligible persons, including persons who had lodged non-refoulement claims in Hong Kong but were eventually rejected and repatriated to their places of origin.

(10) The Government attaches great importance to the non-refoulement claim issue and has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, so as to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism being abused under a multi-pronged approach. Relevant measures include:

- (a) Enhancing intelligence exchange: To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the HKSAR Government will continue stepping up tripartite intelligence exchanges with relevant law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and Macao. ImmD and the Hong Kong Police Force have also collaborated with Mainland authorities to proactively strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal immigration activities of NEC IIs.
- (b) Interception at source: To prevent potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong, the Secretary for Security made the Immigration (Advance Passenger Information) Regulation under the Immigration Ordinance in March 2023 to specify that airline operators must provide the API data and aircraft information of every traveller through the API system prior to a flight's departure for Hong Kong. ImmD has launched the API system by phases since September 2024 and will complete its implementation in September 2025;
- (c) Screening non-refoulement claims: ImmD has continued to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, including handling each new non-refoulement claim received instantly;

- (d) Processing of claim-related appeals: TCAB has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases. Currently, the average processing time of an appeal case has been reduced from over seven months in the past to about four months;
- (e) Detention: The Government will continue to reinforce ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. In addition to the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively, thereby increasing the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants to three. Moreover, on 1 April 2025, the in-situ expansion in NKCI was completed, which provided 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%). The overall detention capacity has been increased to 940;
- (f) Combating illegal employment: To reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, ImmD and relevant law enforcement agencies have continued to take vigorous actions against illegal employment in a proactive manner, with the target of conducting no less than 13 200 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to reduce the economic incentives for claimants;
- (g) Claims lodged by foreign domestic helpers (FDHs): As quite a number of non-refoulement claimants had been employed as FDHs prior to lodging their claims, SB and ImmD have been collaborating and will continue to proactively collaborate with the relevant Consulates General in Hong Kong to step up publicity and education for newly arrived FDHs, impressing upon them that the non-refoulement claim mechanism should not be abused and that working illegally in Hong Kong is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment. With the Government's strengthened publicity efforts, only 22% of new claims received in 2024 were raised by former FDHs, down from 58% during the peak in 2022; and
- (h) Removal: The updated removal policy took effect on 7 December 2022. ImmD would proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the CFI irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. The Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants. In 2024, 2 219 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong, surpassing that year's target by 68% (i.e. removing not less than 1 320 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong).

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, the Government will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB002

(Question Serial No. 0565)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Provision for 2025-26 is \$567.4 million lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25 (substantially decreased by 52.7%). This is mainly due to the decreased cash flow requirement for the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS), partly offset by the increased provisions for the full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2024-25, departmental expenses and a net increase of 10 posts in 2025-26. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please list in detail in respect of each round of the last 3 rounds of applications for the FSWS: 1) the number of applications received; 2) the number of applications approved; 3) specific subsidy amounts; 4) district locations of the buildings; 5) types of owners' organisations; 6) reasons for applications refused. When will the fourth round of the FSWS be launched?
2. What are the details of the net increase of 10 posts, including the staffing provision, salary expenses, job content and duties involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

(1)

To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the Ordinance), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the total funding for the FSWS to \$5.5 billion. The implementation of the FSWS requires non-recurrent funding. The URA assists in the administration of the FSWS, including handling applications, disbursing subsidies and monitoring the use of funds. The Government will release funding to the URA in instalments. As at 28 February 2025, a total of \$2.62 billion of funding has been released to the URA. In 2025-26, the amount to be released to the URA is expected to be \$100 million. As the URA already has sufficient cash flow to meet the relevant needs, the Government's smaller amount in provision for 2025-26 will not affect the financial support provided by the FSWS to owners of old buildings.

The URA rolled out 2 rounds of applications in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Since then, the URA launched the third round application from April to September 2023 to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings. There were 2 572 and 904 applications in the first and second rounds of the FSWS respectively, with applications that met the basic application requirements amounted to 2 046 and 596 respectively. The URA has issued letters of Approval-in-principle (AIP) to the applicants of the above 2 642 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of fire safety improvement works. No application was refused in the first and second rounds. For the third round, the URA received 1 293 applications that met the basic application requirements. As at 28 February 2025, the URA has issued letters of AIP to applicants of 520 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of fire safety improvement works. No application has been refused so far. As for the remaining 773 applications that met the basic application requirements, to avoid driving up the cost of the fire safety improvement works required by the Ordinance due to a surge of demand for works, the URA will gradually and timely issue letters of AIP to successful applicants in batches. In the above-mentioned 3 rounds of applications, the buildings involved in applications that met the basic application requirements are distributed across all 18 districts in Hong Kong. In terms of subsidy, as of 28 February 2025, the URA had disbursed subsidies about \$92 million to the owners of 199 buildings. In addition, based on its preliminary estimates, the URA has set aside approximately \$4 billion for the rest of the applications that meet basic application requirements. The URA will disburse subsidies to owners based on the actual progress of completed projects and their compliance with the scheme requirements. The Government will conduct timely reviews to decide whether another round of application will be launched having regard to actual needs.

In respect of the types of owners' organisations, the above buildings include those that have established owners' corporations (OCs), those that have formed owners' committees or appointed managers in accordance with the deed of mutual covenant, and those that have not yet established OCs nor owners' committees but have obtained the consent of all owners to participate in the FSWS.

(2)

The Programme of Internal Security will see a net increase of 10 posts, mainly due to the Security Bureau (SB)'s plan to establish the Commissioner's Office to discharge duties for the purpose of the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Ordinance (the Ordinance). The Commissioner's Office is responsible for implementing the brand new legislation and discharging duties for the purpose of the Ordinance, including designating critical infrastructure operators (CI Operators) and critical computer systems, formulating codes of practice, investigating and following up on non-compliance cases, and assisting CI Operators in responding to computer-system security incidents. In spite of this, the SB has planned the Commissioner's Office's establishment based on the principles of streamlining manpower and maximising the use of existing resources. The Commissioner's Office will consist of about 30 staff members, two-thirds of whom are deployed through existing resources, including personnel seconded from the Police Force and the Digital Policy Office.

On the other hand, the Bureau Administration Unit of SB has reduced 1 Clerical Assistant post due to workflow optimisation. After offsetting, there is a net increase of 10 posts under the Programme of Internal Security.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB003

(Question Serial No. 0146)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Frontier closed area and permit

There are 7 land boundary control points between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, each having its respective closed areas. In this connection, could the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. With the Sha Tau Kok opening-up plan, the study on implementing contactless clearance in the Lok Ma Chau Loop, and Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point's "direct access to people and vehicles" arrangement being well-received by members of the public, will the Government consider launching a review on the coverage of the closed areas, and adopting the "direct access by people and vehicles" arrangement at the redeveloped Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok control points, so as to provide members of the public with more ways to reach the control points direct?
2. With the Sha Tau Kok opening-up plan and activities held by the North District Council in the area, has the Government considered simplifying the application for Sha Tau Kok Closed Area Permits?
3. There are views relaying that due to the closed area, residents of San Tin are unable to reach the Lok Ma Chau Station direct. They have to go to the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line to cross the boundary to the Mainland and then return to Hong Kong before they can take the East Rail Line. Will the Government put forward any improvement proposal?
4. The Budget Speech mentioned the plan to develop an Airport City. Will it involve reviewing the airport's closed area regulations to align with details of the plan?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

1. The Frontier Closed Area (FCA) helps law enforcement agencies maintain boundary control between Hong Kong and the Mainland and combat illegal immigration and other

cross-boundary criminal activities. When enhancing existing boundary control points (BCPs) or developing new ones, the HKSAR Government will, as far as practicable, limit the coverage of the FCA to a scope necessary for maintaining public order. We will also take into consideration the planning of individual BCPs in examining the FCA needed so as to tie in with the development of the relevant BCPs and areas.

2. It is an established practice for the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to streamline the application for Sha Tau Kok Closed Area Permits (CAPs) as far as possible. Applicants are only required to provide the most basic information to facilitate the assessment of applications. HKPF launched the electronic Closed Area Permit (e-CAP) system on 1 December 2023 to facilitate online application of e-CAPs by visitors to the Sha Tau Kok FCA, cross-boundary students and government personnel and the issuance of e-CAPs. The system was expanded for use by business corporations/organisations, the media, residents and visitors in the third quarter of 2024. In the light of the feedback received, the HKPF is now enhancing the functions of the online platform to make it more user-friendly.
3. The Lok Ma Chau MTR station and the adjacent public transport interchange aim to provide transport service to cross-boundary passengers using the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP so as to ensure safe and efficient operation of the BCP. For the above purpose, the Lok Ma Chau MTR Station is currently designed for passengers to enter and exit Hong Kong via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP only. As such, passengers who travel to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP by bus, minibus or taxi cannot head back to other locations in Hong Kong by MTR. Residents of San Tin may take trains at stations other than Lok Ma Chau Station, such as Sheung Shui Station and Yuen Long Station.
4. Having consulted the Transport and Logistics Bureau, our reply is as follows:
The Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) has promulgated a development plan for expanding the Airport City. The Airport Island as well as the land and waters in its vicinity will be utilised for the development of a diversified project encompassing high-end commercial, art, tourism and leisure activities, with aviation as its core business, injecting new momentum into our economic development and building a new, world-leading landmark. The AAHK is progressively taking forward the various projects under the Airport City vision as planned. The Government will review and amend the Restricted Area of the Airport with the AAHK in a timely manner to tie in with the overall development of the Airport City.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB004

(Question Serial No. 0147)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Streamlining clearance procedures

Streamlining clearance procedures is an important measure on integrating into the overall national development and facilitating the flow of people. In this connection, could the Government inform this Committee:

1. Will the arrangement of streamlining clearance procedures be available at Huanggang, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok control points, which are either under redevelopment or being prepared for redevelopment? What is the progress of the work?
2. Some members of the public have relayed that the closing time of the clearance services of Heung Yuen Wai Control Point and Lok Ma Chau Spur Line at 10 pm/10:30 pm is too early. What are the latest arrangements for extending the operating hours of clearance services at land boundary control points in the future and the follow-up action taken?
3. As the number of cross-boundary passengers at Heung Yuen Wai Control Point has already exceeded the original design limit, will consideration be given to an upgrade plan? Will it be possible to implement the co-location arrangement?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

1. In planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency.

“Collaborative inspection and joint clearance” is a new clearance mode. Under this clearance mode, automatic channels/counters of both sides will be set up side by side within their respective jurisdiction at the boundary inside the port, such that outbound and inbound visitors only need to queue up once to have their documents inspected and their identities verified

once to pass through the immigration facilities of both sides in order to complete the respective immigration procedures, thereby greatly enhancing the overall clearance experience and efficiency.

As visitors will only need to have their identities verified once to complete the respective clearance procedures of both sides under the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode, the detailed operation would need to be agreed by the Shenzhen and HKSAR Governments before confirmation. The two governments are discussing the operational details in depth regarding the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port.

Besides, the two governments have reached a consensus and agreed on adopting a cross-river construction approach in the redevelopment of Sha Tau Kok Control Point. The redeveloped Sha Tau Kok Control Point will become a passenger clearance-only control point and implement the collaborative inspection and joint clearance mode.

When studying the Man Kam To Control Point renovation project with the Mainland in the future, the two governments will explore the adoption of a convenient and efficient mode of immigration clearance to enhance the clearance efficiency.

2. The HKSAR Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance service at respective land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

3. According to the information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017, the designed daily handling capacity of the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point is 30 000 passenger trips. The control point has been very popular among the public since its commissioning, with an average daily passenger throughput of some 70 000 in 2024. The relevant departments have been taking various measures, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimization of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc, to enhance the control point’s handling capacity and efficiency.

To further increase the overall handling capacity, the Immigration Department has set up 10 additional mobile counters in the passenger arrival hall of the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point. The enhancement works to replace some of the traditional counters with e-Channels was completed in early June last year, increasing the total number of e-Channels in the passenger arrival hall from 14 to 18. The Customs and Excise Department has all along been adopting a risk management approach in the selection of travellers for examination to avoid causing inconvenience to other cross-boundary travellers. During festive periods or long holidays, relevant government departments will minimise leave for frontline officers, operate additional counters and channels, and deploy more security guards to assist in crowd management so as to ensure smooth passenger flow at the control point.

With the above measures, citizens can complete immigration clearance within a few minutes during non-peak periods of ordinary days; whereas for weekends and festive peak periods, citizens can complete immigration clearance within 15 minutes most of the time.

Issues involved in changing the clearance mode of existing BCPs are far more complicated than implementing new clearance mode at new BCPs, and the related works must be carried out on the premise that the BCPs' existing operations will not be affected. It is therefore necessary for the HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities to make careful planning to ensure that the port design, boundary arrangements, facilities layout, passenger flow, and other ancillary facilities can accommodate the operation of the new clearance mode before its implementation could be considered.

The HKSAR Government will continue to strive for enhancing the handling capacity of various BCPs and applying innovative technology, with a view to providing more efficient immigration clearance services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1534)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work on “combating drug trafficking and drug abuse”, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. what are the current size of establishment and staff-related expenditure of the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau;
2. in view of the recent prevalence of the “space oil drug”, what are the manpower and administrative expenses allocated by the Government to combat the “space oil drug” in 2024-25 (including but not limited to procuring rapid test kits and carrying out relevant anti-drug publicity);
3. whether sufficient provision has been earmarked in 2025-26 to combat emerging drugs, including the “space oil drug”, and what is the preliminary work plan.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

1. At present, there are 31 civil servants (including 3 directorate officers and 28 non-directorate officers) and another 4 contract staff members working in the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau. There is no supernumerary post in the ND. The staff-related expenditure of the ND in 2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025) is about \$29.68 million.
2. and 3. On combatting the “space oil drug”, the law enforcement agencies have taken a series of enforcement actions against related crimes. Expenses allocated by different law enforcement agencies for anti-drug efforts, such as procurement of rapid test kits, are covered under their respective subheads. Under Head 151, as the staff members deployed by the ND for combatting the “space oil drug” are also performing other duties, a breakdown on the concerned resources is not maintained. Current staff establishment and relevant expenses of the ND are set out in the reply to (1) above.

As for the expenses on preventive education and publicity under Head 151, the revised estimate for 2024-25 is \$44 million, which covers expenses for the usual preventive education and publicity (including publicity on combatting the “space oil drug”) as well as funding set aside for the expenditures required for organising a series of activities in light of the 60th anniversary of the Action Committee Against Narcotics in 2025 with a view to consolidating the anti-drug awareness in the community as mentioned in the Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address Supplement. In 2025-26, the ND will draw on the experience of previous years and deploy resources for publicity in the light of the latest drug situation.

On combatting the “space oil drug” and other emerging drugs, the ND will continue to step up preventive education and publicity, focusing on young people. The ND will proactively collaborate with various departments, education units and anti-drug/social welfare units, engaging them in coordinated efforts to explain the harmful effects of the “space oil drug” to the public through different channels, to raise self-awareness on drug prevention among the public and to seek more ways to reach out to drug abusers and encourage them to quit drug by seeking counselling and treatment as soon as possible. The ND will consider using different publicity channels (such as a combination of online and offline publicity materials) to explain the harmful effects of dangerous drugs and the penalties for drug trafficking. The ND will also strengthen collaboration with government bureaux/departments, key opinion leaders and media organisations to make appeal to different sectors of the community to fight against drugs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB006

(Question Serial No. 1593)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance by the Government to non-refoulement claimants (including allowances for temporary accommodation, food, transportation, basic utilities, etc.), please inform this Committee of the following:

1. the number of non-refoulement claimants receiving humanitarian assistance from the Social Welfare Department and the total expenditure involved in each of the past 10 years;
2. the number of non-refoulement claimants granted fee waivers by the Hospital Authority and the total expenditure involved in each of the past 10 years; and
3. the number of unsuccessful claimants repatriated to their places of origin by the Immigration Department and the total cost involved in each of the past 10 years.

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

Having consulted the Health Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), our reply is as follows:

- (1) Over the past 10 years, the number of service users and expenditures incurred by SWD on providing humanitarian assistance for non-refoulement claimants through service contractor are as follows:

Year	Number of service users (as at 31 March)	Expenditure on humanitarian assistance (\$ million)
2015-16	12 671	489
2016-17	13 738	729
2017-18	12 365	587

Year	Number of service users (as at 31 March)	Expenditure on humanitarian assistance (\$ million)
2018-19	10 842	531
2019-20	10 711	482
2020-21	12 194	540
2021-22	12 582	579
2022-23	12 252	590
2023-24	12 362	578
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	12 417 (as at 28 February 2025)	595

(2) In terms of healthcare services, non-refoulement claimants are by definition Non-Eligible Persons (NEP). The Hospital Authority (HA) will, on the premise that medical services for local residents are not affected, provide NEPs with medical services. NEPs who receive medical services from the HA are required to pay medical fees which are determined on a cost recovery principle. To ensure rational use of limited public resources, there is in general no waiving of medical fees for NEPs unless there are exceptional circumstances and financial hardship. The number of persons involved and expenditures for each year in waiving the medical fees for non-refoulement claimants by the HA in the past 10 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of persons approved (as at 31 March)	Amount waived (\$ million)
2015-16	17 627	44
2016-17	19 870	56
2017-18	20 598	66
2018-19	18 961	76
2019-20	17 625	57
2020-21	17 910	63
2021-22	18 756	84
2022-23	17 901	80
2023-24	18 657	81
2024-25 (as at 31 January 2025)	15 709	68 (actual expenditure)

(3) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism in March 2014. Over the past ten years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2015	1 734
2016	1 706
2017	2 520
2018	2 527
2019	1 618
2020	632
2021	753

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398

ImmD has deployed dedicated manpower to expedite the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong since 2019-20. The related manpower expenditure is tabulated below. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

Year	Major expenditure on repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants (\$ million)
2015-16	-
2016-17	-
2017-18	-
2018-19	-
2019-20	45
2020-21	47
2021-22	47
2022-23	50
2023-24	57
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	59

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB007

(Question Serial No. 2952)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under Programme (2), it is mentioned that the Security Bureau will continue to take forward the legislative exercise on the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Bill (the Bill) and its implementation. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

Under Programme (2), the provision for 2025-26 is \$567.4 million (52.7%) lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25 due to the decreased cash flow requirement for the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme. However, with the implementation of the Bill, the Government will need to establish the Commissioner's Office to discuss with the 6 specified sectors about the codes of practice, and may even engage experts for the related work. Has the Government earmarked resources to take forward the implementation of the Bill? If yes, what are the staff establishment and estimated expenditure? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

The Security Bureau (SB) plans to establish the Commissioner's Office to discharge duties for the purpose of the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Ordinance (the Ordinance). The Commissioner's Office is responsible for implementing the brand new legislation and discharging the duties stipulated in the Ordinance, including designating critical infrastructure operators (CI Operators) and critical computer systems, formulating codes of practice, investigating and following up on non-compliance cases, and assisting CI Operators in responding to computer-system security incidents. In spite of this, the SB has planned the Commissioner's Office's establishment based on the principles of streamlining manpower and maximising the use of existing resources. The Commissioner's Office will consist of about 30 staff members, two-thirds of whom are deployed through existing resources, including personnel seconded from the Police Force and the Digital Policy Office.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB008

(Question Serial No. 2953)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In respect of the handling of non-refoulement claims, will the Government inform this Committee:

- 1) of the respective numbers of claims received, determined, withdrawn or no further action could be taken, as well as pending screening in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) (set out in table form by nationality);
- 2) of the number of claimants arrested for committing criminal offences/suspected illegal employment in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) and the year-on-year rate of change (set out in table form by offence);
- 3) of the actual expenditure and manpower arrangements for the work relating to the handling of non-refoulement claims and the two schemes under publicly-funded legal assistance in the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25);
- 4) of the estimated expenditure and manpower arrangements for the work relating to the handling of non-refoulement claims;
- 5) of the number of claimants removed from Hong Kong each year through the updated removal policy since its implemented in December 2022;
- 6) of the measures taken by the Bureau to expedite the handling of non-refoulement claims in the past year and their effectiveness;
- 7) of whether it will consider abolishing the “going-out pass” system in an effort to combat abuse of the non-refoulement claim mechanism; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

(1) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from

Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

As at end-February 2025, ImmD received 28 154 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 491
Indonesian	5 361
Indian	4 618
Pakistani	3 251
Bangladeshi	2 546
Filipino	2 259
Nepalese	511
Thai	486
Nigerian	294
Other countries	2 337
Total	28 154

(2) According to the Police's record, since 2020 and up to end-2024, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Shop theft	250	254	145	193	176
Miscellaneous thefts	98	134	99	71	96

Offence	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Wounding and serious assault	92	90	51	75	76
Serious drug offences (Note 1)	112	92	85	99	63
Disorder/fighting in public places	18	33	44	42	48
Criminal damage	36	37	25	33	47
Burglary	36	22	27	18	27
Serious immigration offences (Note 2)	38	50	29	38	24
Others (Note 3)	254	217	182	176	229
Total	934	929	687	745	786

Note 1: “Serious drug offences” include possession of dangerous drugs exceeding a specified amount (i.e. possession of drugs, such as 5 grams of cocaine/heroin/marijuana, etc.), manufacturing dangerous drugs, trafficking of dangerous drugs, etc.

Note 2: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants (IIs), arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person.

Note 3: “Others” include forgery and coinage, robbery, possession of offensive weapon and pickpocketing etc..

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2020, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2020	156
2021	438
2022	454
2023	484
2024	363
2025 (January to February)	48

(3) – (4) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2020-21	311	47	95	540	992
2021-22	298	47	142	579	1 067
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimates for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2020-21	207	72	73	36
2021-22	207	72	73	36
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	75	35
2024-25	207	81	73 [^]	35
2025-26 (Estimate)	207	81	73 [^]	35

* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2025, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2020-21, the non-civil servant posts in the Duty Lawyer Scheme are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	1	2	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	6	5	5	5	6	6
Court Liaison Officer	13	17	22	17	32	32
Senior Personal Secretary	4	2	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	4	4	4	6	6
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	1	1	1	2	2
Total	35	34	39	34	53	53

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office since 2020-21 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26
Civil Servant posts						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	0
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	0
Workman II	2	1	1	1	1	0
Non-civil servant posts						
Number	5	5	5	4	0	0
Total	16	15	15	14	10[^]	0[^]

[^] PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. Therefore, the Government has since 2024-25 commenced to reduce the number of civil servant and non-civil servant staff in the Pilot Scheme Office.

(5) – (6) The Government has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy in handling non-refoulement claims. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

Over the past year, ImmD has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, while ensuring that the high standards of fairness as required by law are met. Through flexible staff deployment and optimised workflow, the average processing time of each claim is about 10 weeks, representing a substantial reduction of about 60% when compared with the processing time in the peak period. The number of NEC IIs intercepted witnessed an increase in the second half of 2023, resulting in a corresponding increase in the number of new claims received. With the continuous efforts from various parties in combatting illegal immigration, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has gradually reduced since the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure for February 2025 (i.e. 34 people) fell by more than 90% when compared with the peak of 364 in October 2023. At the same time, the number of new claims also dropped, falling by more than 50% from the peak of 514 in January 2024 to 217 as at in February 2025. ImmD will continue to flexibly redeploy manpower and allocate resources in screening non-refoulement claims, with a view to ensuring that new claims received can be handled instantly.

As for the processing of claim-related appeals, TCAB has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the average processing time down to about four months from over seven months in the past. In 2024, TCAB completed 3 038 cases, meeting the key performance indicator of handling no less than 3 000 appeal cases each year. As at end-2024, there were 675 appeal cases pending processing by TCAB.

The updated removal policy took effect from 7 December 2022, whereby ImmD would proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims

by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2025, ImmD has removed a total of 4 468 claimants from Hong Kong, including 328 under the updated policy.

(7) In March 2014, the Court of Final Appeal ruled in *Ghulam Rbani v the Director of Immigration* [2014] HKCFA 21 that the detention power exercised by ImmD in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Immigration Ordinance is subject to the common law *Hardial Singh* principles, i.e. a person may be detained only for a period that is reasonable to complete the removal procedures to remove a person from Hong Kong (including the screening procedure for non-refoulement claim). To this end, ImmD has implemented measures to ensure that every detention decision meets the requirements of the law (including the *Hardial Singh* principles), including making and publishing detention policies to set out factors that may be considered in determining whether an II should be detained, or allowed to enter into recognizance as an alternative to detention. Moreover, ImmD will review each detention case regularly and upon changes in circumstances to ensure that the whole detention period is lawful and reasonable. Having considered the law, financial resource implications, and security concerns, we consider that the proposal to detain all claimants would not be suitable. The Government will continue to make full use of the existing detention facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community, and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. The law enforcement agencies will also step up enforcement actions against immigration offences and illegal employment in order to reduce the claimants' economic incentives.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB009

(Question Serial No. 1659)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It has been reported that there is a downward trend in the age of persons committing drug trafficking in Hong Kong and some lawbreakers have even made use of the internet as a platform for selling drugs. The situation is a cause of concern. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the number of young people arrested on suspicion of having committed drug offences in each of the past 3 years, with a breakdown by aged under 21, aged under 18 and aged 15; of whether new measures will be formulated by the Bureau targeting the situation of a downward trend in the age of persons committing drug offences; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that;

2. of the amount of operating expenses on implementing anti-drug trafficking and anti-drug abuse activities, as well as preventive education and publicity in the past 3 years; of whether social media and publicity initiatives will be launched against drug trafficking in the coming year; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that;

3. of whether new measures will be formulated by the Bureau in the coming year targeting the new trend in drug trafficking; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

(1) In the past decade, the number of young people aged under 21 arrested on suspicion of drug offences decreased from 548 in 2015 to 299 in 2024. The proportion of young people among all arrestees for drug offences also decreased from 12 per cent to 9 per cent over the same period. In the past 3 years, the number of young people arrested on suspicion of drug offences has been statistically categorised by law enforcement agencies (LEAs) into 2 age groups i.e. aged 10 to 15 and aged 16 to 20. There is no separate category maintained for those under 18. The relevant figures are as follows:

Number of young people arrested (the proportion of young people among all arrestees, %)	2022	2023	2024
Aged 10 to 15	58 (1.4%)	36 (1.1%)	44 (1.4%)
Aged 16 to 20	425 (10.6%)	286 (8.4%)	255 (7.7%)
Total number of young people aged under 21 arrested	483 (12%)	322 (9.5%)	299 (9%)

Although the above data show that the situation of young people committing drug offences is stable, the Government is aware of the potential problem of youth drug abuse in recent years, including the global trend of online drug dealing. To tackle the problem of online drug dealing, the LEAs have stepped up cyber patrol and taken relevant law enforcement actions on the Internet. Speeches, actions, videos or social media contents concerned may serve as evidence of an offence. To combat the exploitation of young people in drug trafficking, the LEAs may apply to the court for increasing the sentence of offenders who have exploited young people in drug trafficking under section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134), so as to enhance the deterrent effect. Apart from law enforcement, the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB) and the LEAs have also launched publicity and education targeting young people. These initiatives actively adopt methods popular among the youth, such as social media, animated videos, key opinion leaders (KOLs), etc., and include such contents as warning the young people that young age is not a mitigating factor in court sentence, and that students involving in drug trafficking can also be heavily sentenced. Various LEAs have also covered anti-drug education programmes in their youth activities. Young people participating in these activities can bring anti-drug messages to their families, schoolmates and friends, and disseminate them in the community.

(2)-(3) The Government attaches great importance to enhancing community awareness of drug abuse, the harms of drug abuse and drug trafficking. It has adopted the anti-drug slogan of “Let’s Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!” and engaged mascots and cartoon characters to take forward anti-drug education and publicity through different channels. In response to the Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address Supplement that the SB will “step up publicity and education to heighten public awareness of the risk of being recruited into drug trafficking activities on websites and social media platforms that are favoured by drug traffickers”, the ND has continuously published posts on social media and put up large banners at major immigration control points to enhance publicity on the criminal liability of drug offences. The details of our publicity efforts are specified as follows:

In respect of online publicity, the ND has over the years placed advertisements on popular websites and mobile applications and at fixed locations, as well as publishing posts on social media to emphasise the harms of drug abuse and point out the fact that drug trafficking is a serious offence. A short video was jointly launched with the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) in November 2024, featuring anti-drug ambassadors Agent Don’t and Agent Hope, the anti-drug mascot “Mighty Cat” of the Narcotics Bureau of the HKPF, as

well as the anti-scam mascot “The Little Grape”, to caution young people against working as a cross-boundary goods carrier for financial reward which is indeed a drug trafficking trap..

The ND has produced TV and radio announcements (APIs), animations and videos in a timely manner having regard to the drug situation. For example, an animated video and an API were launched between 2023 and 2024 to combat cocaine; and APIs were produced in 2022 and 2024 to combat cannabis. In addition, to combat the abuse of “space oil drugs”, the ND has successively launched an animated video, an API and feature stories exploring the harms of “space oil drugs” since the second half of 2024. On 14 February 2025, the Government listed etomidate and its 3 analogues as dangerous drugs, and the ND has released a new series of APIs on the same day.

In respect of offline publicity campaigns, the ND has placed advertisements at specific locations (such as various boundary control points, MTR and Light Rail trains/stations, cinemas, outdoor panels, bus and public light bus bodies/stops), as well as putting up banners in various districts (such as government venues, schools, public housing estates, villages in the New Territories and places with high foot traffic) to emphasise the seriousness and severe criminal liability of drug trafficking offences.

The ND has also organised in-person activities. For example, the roving exhibition held in the Hong Kong Book Fair, shopping malls and tertiary institutions in 2024. As the year 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Action Committee Against Narcotics’ (ACAN), the ND has co-organised activities with it, including a colouring and drawing competition, and an interactive roving exhibitions in education institutions and the community, to remind the public of the consequences of drug trafficking and the harms of drug abuse.

Looking ahead, the ND will as usual closely monitor the new drug trafficking and smuggling trends in collaboration with other departments. It will review and promptly launch targeted measures or projects to safeguard public safety from time to time. Apart from the above measures, the ND will continue to formulate publicity strategies in response to the societal environment and drug situation, and consider explaining the harms of drug abuse and the criminal liability of drug trafficking through various publicity channels (e.g. integrated online and offline publicity materials). It will also collaborate with other government bureaux/departments, KOLs and media organisations to appeal to the public to stand against drugs together.

The expenditures (revised estimate) on preventive education and publicity (PE&P) under Head 151 in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 were \$30 million, \$29 million and \$44 million respectively. The revised estimate for 2024-25 covers not only the usual PE&P (including publicity against “space oil drugs”), but also funding set aside for the expenditures required for organising a series of activities in light of the 60th anniversary of the ACAN in 2025 with a view to consolidating the anti-drug awareness in the community as mentioned in the Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address Supplement. The ND will draw on the experience of previous years and deploy resources for publicity in the light of the latest drug situation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB010

(Question Serial No. 0435)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In the past 3 years, did the Security Bureau engage external lawyers for consultancy services in accordance with the Stores and Procurement Regulations of the Government without first seeking assistance from the Department of Justice? If so, what were the nature of such services and the expenditures incurred?

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

The Security Bureau did not engage any external lawyers for consultancy services without first seeking assistance from the Department of Justice in the past 3 years.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB011

(Question Serial No. 1387)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under this Programme that the Government will continue to oversee the gradual opening of the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Frontier Closed Area (except Chung Ying Street) for promoting cultural and eco-tourism. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) Please list by month the numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors having participated in the Second Phase of the STK Opening-up Plan since its implementation.
- 2) Please list in tabular form the cultural and eco-tourism itineraries and products that the Government has created and launched/ plans to create and launch, the number of participants/expected participants, and the relevant staffing provision and expenditure.
- 3) Regarding the reprovisioned Chung Ying Street Checkpoint in STK which commenced operation on 23 December 2024, what are i) the staffing provision; ii) the operating expenditure; and iii) the monthly utilisation rate?
- 4) In respect of the work of exploring the application of facial recognition technology to complement the future opening up of Chung Ying Street for tourism, what are the staffing provision, expenditure involved and the work progress? When the first phase of the opening up of the street is expected at the earliest?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

- 1) The numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors¹ since the implementation of the second phase opening up of the Sha Tau Kok (STK) (excluding Chung Ying Street) in January 2024 are set out below:

Month	Number of individual visitors	Number of tour group visitors	Total number of visitors
January 2024	9 909	4 268	14 177
February 2024	9 424	4 513	13 937
March 2024	6 883	7 719	14 602
April 2024	8 264	7 631	15 895
May 2024	7 249	6 966	14 215
June 2024	6 606	6 194	12 800
July 2024	4 985	2 842	7 827
August 2024	4 579	1 890	6 469
September 2024	5 081	3 718	8 799
October 2024	6 716	5 180	11 896
November 2024	8 459	6 198	14 657
December 2024	9 876	4 475	14 351
January 2025	11 496	3 773	15 269
February 2025	8 617	3 321	11 938
March 2025 (as at 5 March)	4 556	1 854	6 410
Total	112 700	70 542	183 242

Note 1: According to the number of applications for closed area permits.

2) Regarding the relevant work of the Security Bureau (SB), we, in collaboration with the STK District Rural Committee, have developed popular attractions such as the “top 10 attractions”, “top 10 delicacies” and “top 10 cultural attractions” of STK. In addition, under the second phase opening-up of STK launched on 1 January 2024, the coverage of the opening-up was extended to the entire STK Frontier Closed Area (FCA) (except Chung Ying Street) to promote cultural and eco-tourism of STK and nearby outlying islands. We have sustained our efforts in enhancing local attractions, including the establishment of the Fish Lantern Square on the waterfront of STK to introduce to citizens the national intangible cultural heritage fish-lantern dance; construction of a Chung Ying Street Garden near the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint which features a viewing deck overlooking Chung Ying Street for photo-taking, as well as a life-size retro locomotive model in an old railway station setting; and refurbishment of the former STK fire station, etc. We will continue to step up promotion to proactively showcase the unique attractiveness of STK. The workload concerned will be absorbed by the existing manpower of the SB. As the opening-up plan forms an integral part of the SB’s work, a breakdown of the relevant expenditure is not available.

3) The manpower deployment at the reprovisioned Chung Ying Street Checkpoint in STK is 10 persons in general. The relevant work forms an integral part of the SB’s work. A breakdown of the relevant expenditure is not available. Between January and February 2025, the average monthly utilisation figure was around 215 000 persons.

4) With the gradual opening-up of STK FCA for tourism, the Government will continue to adopt an open stance in exploring promotion of tourism at Chung Ying Street, as well as other feasible measures that can further facilitate the trade and visitors to the STK FCA, with a view to fostering the development of cultural tourism in STK. The Culture, Sports and Tourism

Bureau, the SB and Shenzhen Municipal Government have been communicating constantly for the development of cultural tourism in STK of Hong Kong and Shatoujiao of Shenzhen, and will explore feasible options for Hong Kong tour groups to enter Chung Ying Street for sightseeing via the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint on a “group in, group out” basis, with a view to further promoting the development of cultural tourism in STK. The SB will handle the relevant work with existing manpower resources.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB012

(Question Serial No. 2523)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Government will monitor the need for extending the operating hours of control points to further facilitate passenger and cargo flow. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

(1) Does the Government have any plan to extend the operating hours of other control points in the coming year after drawing reference from relevant data of the preceding year? If yes, what are the manpower to be deployed and the estimated expenditure? If not, what are the reasons?

(2) Will the Government consider extending the facial recognition system to other passenger clearance channels? If yes, what are the details of the manpower and expenditure required? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance service at respective land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

(2) In order to provide more convenient automated clearance services, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has provided facilitation arrangements incorporating facial recognition technology at various BCPs, including the Smart Departure service launched in 2017 for departing visitors to conduct self-service departure clearance, and the Contactless e-Channel launched in 2021. For the Smart Departure service, an eligible passenger needs to present his/her electronic travel document in front of the Smart Departure e-channel to read his/her personal data, and then show his/her face for identity verification after entering the channel. After confirmation, the departure clearance will be completed. As for Contactless e-Channel, registered Hong Kong residents do not need to present their identification

documents when using the "Contactless e-Channel". They only need to scan the encrypted QR code displayed on the mobile application for the system to read their personal data before entering the e-Channels. Facial recognition technology is used to compare the read personal data to confirm their identities. The immigration clearance will then be completed and they can pass through the gate to leave. Both of the above-mentioned immigration clearance arrangements require passengers to present their identity card or QR code to read their personal data, and then use facial recognition technology to verify their personal identity in order to complete the immigration clearance process. These services are well-received by the public.

In addition, the Hong Kong International Airport has put in place the Flight Token service since October 2022, allowing passengers to store their personal data in the database for comparison purpose simply by showing their faces for identity verification during check-in procedure. For subsequent departure procedures at the airport, including departure and boarding, passengers only need to show their faces for identity verification, and is not required to present any travel document or boarding pass again. Eligible Hong Kong residents only need to scan their faces at the Flight Token e-Channel camera to complete departure clearance without presenting any travel document or QR code.

The ImmD will review the use of immigration facilities and system operation from time to time, and continue to apply innovative technologies to immigration control with a view to providing services with enhanced convenience and quality. The manpower and expenditure involved are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the department. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB013

(Question Serial No. 2524)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Government will co-ordinate the development and implementation of co-location arrangement at the new Huanggang Port. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) What is the current construction progress of the new Huanggang Port? What is the estimated date of its commissioning?
- (2) What are the details of the manpower and resources required for the development and implementation of the co-location arrangement? What is the relevant estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

- (1) In respect of the Huanggang Port redevelopment project, the superstructure of the new Huanggang Port building is currently under construction and the target is to strive for basic completion of the new port building by end-2025. The arrangements and timetable for the commissioning of the port are subject to further discussions by the Shenzhen and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Governments.
- (2) The two Governments are discussing the operational details in depths regarding the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode at the new Huanggang Port. As visitors will only need to have their identities verified once to complete the respective clearance procedures of both sides under the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode, the detailed operation would need to be agreed by the Shenzhen and HKSAR Governments before confirmation. Regarding the relevant estimated expenditure, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has agreed in principle to bear the design and construction costs of the entire project (including the Hong Kong Port Area (HKPA)). The HKSAR Government will bear on its own the costs of other capital non-works items for the HKPA, such as furniture and equipment and information systems for the operation at the control point by various departments. As the HKPA is

still at the design stage, estimate of the relevant expenditure is not yet available. The HKSAR Government will follow the established procedures to seek funding for the related items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB014

(Question Serial No. 2525)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Security Bureau will oversee the progress of the engineering feasibility study for the proposed redevelopment of Sha Tau Kok (STK) Port/Control Point. In this connection, please advise on the following:

(1) What is the current progress of the study on the STK Control Point redevelopment project? What is the estimated expenditure for the study? Is it included in the estimate for the coming year? What is the time of completion?

(2) What is the cumulative number of visitors received under the STK tourism project since its implementation? Will the Government consider further opening up the STK Frontier Closed Area (such as Chung Ying Street) for tourism? If there is such a plan, what are the specific timetable and supporting measures? If not, what are the major factors for consideration?

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. The engineering feasibility study for the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Control Point redevelopment project is underway and is expected to complete within 2025. The scope of the study covers road infrastructure, public transportation, land requirement, area of the control point, land ownership, environmental assessment and heritage conservation near the surrounding areas of STK Control Point. According to the revised estimate of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the expenditure on the engineering feasibility study is about \$6 million.

2. Since the launch of the Second Phase Opening-up of STK (except Chung Ying Street) in January 2024, the cumulative numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors applying for Closed Area Permits are 112 700 and 70 542 respectively. With the gradual opening-up of the STK Frontier Closed Area (FCA) for tourism, the Government will continue to keep an open mind and explore feasible measures to further facilitate the trade and tourists visiting the STK FCA, with a view to fostering the development of cultural tourism in STK.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB015****(Question Serial No. 2417)**Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security BureauSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Immigration ControlControlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

It is mentioned under this Programme that the Government will monitor the need for extending the operating hours of control points to further facilitate passenger and cargo flow, and co-ordinate the development and implementation of co-location arrangement at the new Huanggang Port. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the cross-boundary passenger throughput at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 3 years;
2. the staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of the land BCPs;
3. the timetable and details for the development and implementation of co-location arrangement at the new Huanggang Port; and
4. whether there is a specific timetable for increasing the number of land BCPs with 24-hour clearance; if yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)Reply:

1. The number of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Control Points ^{Note 1&2}	2022	2023	2024
Lo Wu	0	45 334 772	64 216 170
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	0	40 845 069	55 052 912
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	0	19 653 992	26 523 953
Lok Ma Chau	0	8 397 262	12 057 437
Man Kam To	0	1 029 876	1 481 167
Shenzhen Bay	927 608	22 685 338	34 478 743
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	192 883	21 570 170	28 467 661
Heung Yuen Wai ^{Note 3}	301	12 450 061	25 500 338
Total	1 120 792	171 966 540	247 778 381

Note 1:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, include cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)

Note 2:

The above table does not include the Hung Hom Control Point and Sha Tau Kok Control Point, both of which have ceased operation. The Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services. Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 3:

The Mainland medical support team arrived Hong Kong SAR via the Heung Yuen Wai BCP on 16 March 2022.

2. The staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of various land BCPs are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

3. The Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments have obtained the Central Government's support for the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the redeveloped Huanggang Port. Currently, the two governments are discussing the operational details in depth regarding the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in the new Huanggang port. The superstructure of the new Huanggang Port building is currently under construction and the target is to strive for the basic completion of the new Port building by end-2025.

4. The HKSAR Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance service at respective land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB016

(Question Serial No. 2437)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The HKSAR Government has implemented the unified screening mechanism since March 2014 to determine claims for non-refoulement protection on all applicable grounds against expulsion, return or surrender from Hong Kong to another country. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the annual statistics on non-refoulement claim cases in the past 5 years?
2. What were the major expenditures used on the handling non-refoulement claims and the related work in each of the past 5 years?
3. How many non-refoulement claim cases were screened, and the rate of substantiated cases, in each of the past 5 years?
4. In each of the past 5 years, what was the country distribution of the substantiated claimants who were referred to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for resettlement to a third country?
5. What is the number of claimants currently stranded in Hong Kong, the reasons for that, and the number by nationality?
6. What is the number of new claimants by nationality in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

(1), (3), (4) and (6) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

Among the 26 790 claims determined by ImmD, 334 of them were substantiated (including 244 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) after appeal).

Regarding the distribution of the third country which the substantiated claimants are being resettled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), given that such arrangement is conducted by UNHCR, the Government does not maintain the relevant information.

As at end-February 2025, ImmD received 28 154 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 491
Indonesian	5 361
Indian	4 618
Pakistani	3 251
Bangladeshi	2 546
Filipino	2 259
Nepalese	511
Thai	486
Nigerian	294
Other countries	2 337
Total	28 154

(2) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2020-21	311	47	95	540	992
2021-22	298	47	142	579	1 067
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and TCAB stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims

and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

(5) According to the information of ImmD, as at end-February 2025, there were around 15 800 claimants remaining in Hong Kong, including about 800 claimants with their claims pending determination by ImmD, about 900 claimants with their appeals against ImmD's decision pending determination by TCAB, about 8 800 claimants with on-going applications to the Court of First Instance for judicial review after their claims/appeals were rejected/dismissed by ImmD/TCAB or other litigation proceedings, as well as about 1 900 claimants being imprisoned, remanded, involved in ongoing prosecution or investigation process, or remaining in Hong Kong due to other reasons. For the 3 400 or so remaining claimants, removal was being arranged. The breakdowns by nationality and status in Hong Kong of the aforesaid non-refoulement claimants are tabulated below:

Nationality	Number of claimants (as at end-February 2025)
Indonesian	3 181
Vietnamese	2 975
Pakistani	2 294
Indian	2 209
Bangladeshi	1 872
Filipino	1 387
Thai	290
Sri Lankan	257
Nigerian	253
Others	1 096
Total	15 814

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB017

(Question Serial No. 2438)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stranded in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has stepped up actions for interception at source in recent years. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the actions taken for interception at source and their effectiveness in the past year?
2. What was the distribution of non-refoulement claimants by means of entry in the past 5 years?
3. How many persons were refused entry in the airport control point in the last 5 years and what were the nationalities concerned?
4. The Government set up the platform of Pre-arrival Registration for Indian Nationals in 2017 targeting at Indian nationals coming to Hong Kong for economic purposes. Just over a year after its implementation, non-refoulement claims lodged by Indian nationals decreased by 74%, the outcome of which was remarkable. Will the Government apply similar measures to those places of origins which have seen significant abuses of the non-refoulement mechanism?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

(1) With the continuous efforts from various parties in combatting illegal immigration, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) arrested in Hong Kong has gradually reduced since the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure for February 2025 (i.e. 34 people) fell by more than 90% when compared with the peak of 364 in October 2023.

The Government has rolled out the Advance Passenger Information (API) system in phases since 3 September 2024. As at end-February 2025, 86 airline operators have been connected to the system, which accounted for 60% of the overall airline operators, including Hong Kong-based airline operators, such as the Cathay Pacific Airways, the Hong Kong Airlines, the Greater Bay Airlines and the Hong Kong Express Airways, etc. As for the around 60 remaining airline operators, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will continue to maintain close communication with them with a view to ensuring that relevant system connection

works will be completed in an orderly manner before 1 September 2025. In just a few months of operation, the API system has been effective in successfully identifying and denying boarding of flights by ineligible persons, including persons who had lodged non-refoulement claims in Hong Kong but were eventually rejected and repatriated to their places of origin. The Government will continue to take forward other measures to strengthen interception at source and reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants / NEC IIs coming to Hong Kong, which include the following measures:

- (a) On intercepting at source, after discussions between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Mainland law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have been strictly examining the purposes of suspicious NEC persons for entry into the Mainland and would refuse their entry in case of suspicion. The Security Bureau also met with the Consulates-General of different countries in Hong Kong, expressed great concern about the influx of NEC IIs into Hong Kong and secured their agreement to fully collaborate. Since 2016, Hong Kong has been conducting dedicated joint operations with Mainland law enforcement units as well as the public security authorities of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces to collaborate in cracking down on NEC persons smuggling from Mainland to Hong Kong;
 - (b) On enforcement and intelligence, the law enforcement agencies of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have worked together to strengthen intelligence exchange; tighten the issuance of visas to Mainland China and control over the entry of NEC tourists into the Mainland; investigate syndicates organising cross-boundary illegal immigration; conduct interception at black spots in the Mainland and joint patrols at sea to deter IIs from entering Hong Kong.
 - (c) In May 2023, the Police upgraded its Crime Wing Working Group on NEC Involvement in Organized Crime and Triad Activities to a steering committee. The steering committee, chaired by a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, strengthens the review of the relevant crime situation and intelligence collection; enhances co-ordination; and formulates more strategic enforcement actions. After the conviction of individual NEC person on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 of an offence in Hong Kong, the prosecution will also provide to the Court the crime statistics or case laws of the relevant group and invite the Court to consider enhancing the sentence as a result of the accused's status.
 - (d) In view that some NEC IIs would work illegally after making non-refoulement claims, ImmD is committed to combat illegal employment, in order to lower their economic incentives. ImmD conducted a total of 13 306 inspections in 2024, representing a 2% increase compared to 2023; and arrested 444 NEC illegal workers and 146 employers. The Government will continue to conduct surprise inspections on black spots where IIs hide and engage in illegal employment and to step up efforts in publicising that employment of illegal workers is a serious offence punishable by a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment of 10 years.
- (2) Over the past five years, the number of non-refoulement claims received by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of claims received
2020	1 223
2021	2 528
2022	1 257
2023	2 135
2024	2 814
2025 (January to February)	400
Total	10 357

ImmD does not maintain the means of entry of the above persons. One of the major sources of persons making non-refoulement claims is IIs. Based on the IIs intercepted in 2024, they entered Hong Kong mainly by sea (nearly 90%), while the remaining entered Hong Kong illegally by land.

(3) and (4) Over the past five years, the number of persons refused entry by region in the airport control point is tabulated as follows:

Region \ Year	Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
2020	104	1 029	111	1 333	15	29	2 621
2021	8	326	78	9	8	3	432
2022	76	1 644	46	40	19	19	1 844
2023	368	4 636	134	106	40	64	5 348
2024	339	5 219	44	83	29	40	5 754
2025 (January to February)	43	954	3	17	3	2	1 022

Apart from the pre-arrival registration arrangement applicable to Indian passport holders, currently, nationals of most major source countries of non-refoulement claimants are required to apply for visit visa for travelling to Hong Kong. The Government will review the policies from time to time and make adjustments as and when necessary.

ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB018

(Question Serial No. 2439)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stranded in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has expedited the screening of non-refoulement claimants in recent years. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the actions taken to expedite the screening of non-refoulement claimants and their effectiveness in the past year?
2. What were the expenditures on publicly funded legal assistance for non-refoulement claimants (including lodging appeals) in the past 5 years?
3. How many appeals were filed with the Torture Claims Appeal Board in the past 5 years and what was the rate of appeal allowed?
4. How many applications for leave to apply for judicial review were made by the claimants in the past 5 years and what were the rate of cases allowed and the average processing time?
5. How many applications for approval to undertake employment were made by the claimants in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

(1) The Government has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy in handling non-refoulement claims. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

Over the past year, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, while ensuring that the high standards of fairness as required by law are met. Through flexible staff deployment and optimised workflow, the average processing time of each claim is about 10 weeks, representing a substantial reduction of about 60% when compared with the processing time in the peak period. As at end-February 2025, there were 776 claims pending ImmD's screening.

As for the processing of claim-related appeals, the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) has

streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the average processing time down to about four months from over seven months in the past. In 2024, TCAB completed 3 038 cases, meeting the key performance indicator of handling no less than 3 000 appeal cases each year. As at end-2024, there were 675 appeal cases pending processing by TCAB.

(2) Since 2020-21, the expenditure of provision of publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) to non-refoulement claimants is tabulated below:

Year	PFLA (\$ million)
2020-21	95
2021-22	142
2022-23	108
2023-24	107
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	146
2025-26 (Estimate)	127

(3) Since 2020, the number of appeals received by TCAB is as follows:

Year	Number of appeals received
2020	870
2021	2 098
2022	1 727
2023	1 395
2024	2 631
2025 (January to February)	404
Total	9 125

Among the above 9 125 appeals received by TCAB, 7 895 cases were determined. Among which, 37 cases were substantiated by TCAB, accounting for 0.5% of the determined cases.

(4) According to the Judiciary's information, the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) of the High Court from 2020 to 2024, the number of leave granted among these applications and the average processing time (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision) are as follows:

Year	Number of applications for leave to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed	Number of leave granted¹	Average processing time (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision)²
2020	2 365	15	1 069 days
2021	1 673	11 ¹	424 days
2022	1 445	10	267 days
2023	2 087	10	219 days
2024	2 418	8	110 days

Remarks:

¹ Include 1 case of leave granted by the Court of Appeal.

² The Judiciary only maintains statistics on the average processing time of leave applications at CFI of the High Court and such statistics only take into account the number of leave applications with leave granted or leave refused as at report generation date, but exclude those withdrawn or outstanding leave applications.

³ The relevant statistics may vary at different report generation date and time since they are live data.

(5) Non-refoulement claimants are illegal immigrants, overstayers or persons who were refused entry upon arrival in Hong Kong. They do not have any legal status to remain in Hong Kong. Regardless of the outcome of their claims, they have no right to work in Hong Kong. For substantiated claimants and mandated refugees recognised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Director of Immigration may exercise his discretion exceptionally to consider, on a case-by-case basis, an application for permission to take employment. Since 2020 and up to end-February 2025, ImmD has received 800 related applications.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB019

(Question Serial No. 2440)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stranded in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has stepped up actions to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants in recent years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) What actions were taken last year to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants and how effective they were?
- 2) How many unsubstantiated claimants were removed in the past 5 years? How many of them were removed under the updated removal policy which came into effect in December 2022?
- 3) How many non-refoulement claimants left Hong Kong voluntarily in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

(1) – (3) Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398
Total	6 885

The updated removal policy took effect from 7 December 2022, whereby ImmD would proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims

by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2025, ImmD has removed a total of 4 468 claimants from Hong Kong, including 328 under the updated policy. The removal number in 2024 has increased by 24% compared to 2023.

The Government has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, including maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders such as the Consulates-General and airlines and arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations as and when necessary and where the situation permits. For unsubstantiated claimants who are refused to accept the repatriation arrangement, ImmD has deployed officers to conduct a total of 32 removal operations since November 2022 with in-flight escort for unsubstantiated claimants who were highly uncooperative and put up strong resistance so as to implement forced repatriation and counter the delaying tactics of unsubstantiated claimants. During the same period, ImmD also carried out 21 large-scale removal operations, through which a total of 494 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong. At end-August 2023, the Secretary for Security also paid a visit to Vietnam to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by ImmD of Hong Kong and the Immigration Department of Vietnam, which covers, among others, enhanced co-operation of both parties in respect of verification and repatriation of non-refoulement claimants.

The Government will remain committed to removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as practicable for maintaining effective immigration control and safeguarding public interest.

ImmD does not maintain the number regarding claimants who leave Hong Kong voluntarily.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB020

(Question Serial No. 0888)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the management of various land control points, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the annual numbers of outbound and inbound passenger trips at each land control point in the past 3 years;
2. the annual numbers of outbound and inbound private car trips at each control point at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To, Shenzhen Bay, Heung Yuen Wai and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in the past 3 years;
3. the annual operating expenditures and staffing provisions of each land control point in the past 3 years;
4. regarding the “document-free” clearance arrangement on trial at Shenzhen Bay Port in November 2024, what is the expenditure involved in setting up “document-free” clearance; as of today, what is the cross-boundary passenger throughput of the “document-free” channels; what is the operation situation and effectiveness; when will a review be conducted regarding the above clearance arrangement; and
5. what is the progress of the redevelopment projects of Huanggang Port and Sha Tau Kok Port?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

1. The respective numbers of outbound and inbound passenger trips at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Control Point Note 1&2	2022		2023		2024	
	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound
Lo Wu	0	0	22 942 565	22 392 207	32 482 169	31 734 001
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	0	0	20 863 110	19 981 959	27 952 187	27 100 725
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-	0	0	9 583 337	10 070 655	12 947 681	13 576 272

Control Point Note 1&2	2022		2023		2024	
	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound
Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link						
Lok Ma Chau	0	0	3 968 540	4 428 722	5 715 930	6 341 507
Man Kam To	0	0	482 539	547 337	738 367	742 800
Shenzhen Bay	439 573	488 035	11 243 223	11 442 115	17 045 623	17 433 120
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	115 150	77 733	11 360 829	10 209 341	14 978 625	13 489 036
Heung Yuen Wai ^{Note 3}	0	301	5 739 480	6 710 581	12 124 064	13 376 274
Total	554 723	566 069	86 183 623	85 782 917	123 984 646	123 793 735

Note 1:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)

Note 2:

The above table does not include the Hung Hom Control Point and Sha Tau Kok Control Point, both of which have ceased operation. The Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services. Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 3:

The Mainland medical support team arrived Hong Kong via the Heung Yuen Wai BCP on 16 March 2022.

2. The respective numbers of outbound and inbound private car trips at various land BCPs in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Control Point Note 4	2022		2023		2024	
	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound
Lok Ma Chau	0	0	812 895	826 616	1 250 234	1 264 020
Man Kam To	0	0	26 937	28 016	50 500	50 392
Shenzhen Bay	1 613	1 346	995 118	980 239	1 543 524	1 533 875
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	812	1 572	770 732	758 916	1 687 148	1 683 286

Control Point Note 4	2022		2023		2024	
	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound
Heung Yuen Wai	0	0	82 145	80 722	246 017	244 063
Total	2 425	2 918	2 687 827	2 674 509	4 777 423	4 775 636

Note 4:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)

3. The staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of various land BCPs are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

4. Starting from 20 November 2024, the Mainland has upgraded on a trial basis some of its e-channels at the Shenzhen Bay Port of Shenzhen Municipality and Gongbei Port of Zhuhai Municipality of the Guangdong Province, allowing individuals travelling frequently to and from Hong Kong and Macao for private purposes to use “document-free” channels. According to the notice issued by the Exit and Entry Administration of the People’s Republic of China, Mainland residents holding a valid Exit-entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao and multiple exit endorsement for travelling to Hong Kong and Macao for stay, visiting relatives, business visit, talents or other purposes, and Hong Kong and Macao residents (including non-Chinese citizens) holding a valid Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Permanent Residents, who are aged 14 or above and have agreed to the collection of facial features, fingerprints and other information by the border inspection authority may use the “document-free” channels at the border without presenting their physical travel documents.

As the measure pertains to Mainland matters, we do not have the relevant information on the expenditure, passenger throughput and operational effectiveness concerned.

5. In respect of the Huanggang Port redevelopment project, the superstructure of the new Huanggang Port building is currently under construction and the target is to strive for basic completion of the new Huanggang Port building by end-2025. On the other hand, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen are discussing the operational details in depth regarding the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port.

In respect of the redevelopment project of Sha Tau Kok Control Point, the engineering feasibility study is underway and is expected to complete within 2025. The scope of the study covers road infrastructure, public transportation, land requirement, area of the control point, land ownership, environmental assessment, and heritage conservation near the surrounding areas of Sha Tau Kok Control Point. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government will continue to press ahead with the redevelopment project.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB021

(Question Serial No. 0891)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2025-26, the Government will continue to maintain its overall capability in response to major incidents by way of aligned response plans, inter-departmental exercises, close liaison with key public and private sector stakeholders as well as benchmarking against the experience of overseas emergency services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please set out in a table the content of the various inter-departmental exercises conducted in the past 2 years, lists of participating government departments and non-governmental organisations, the respective numbers of participants, number of public participants, and the expenditure involved.
2. How many inter-departmental exercises are expected to be conducted this year? What are the relevant details and estimated expenditures?
3. Did the Government conduct any cross-territorial inter-departmental response exercises jointly with the Mainland authorities in the past 2 years; if so, what are the details and expenditure?
4. Does it anticipate to conduct cross-territorial inter-departmental response exercises jointly with the Mainland authorities this year; if so, what are the details and estimated expenditures?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

- 1) Inter-departmental exercises conducted by the Security Bureau (SB) in the past 2 years are as follows:

Year	Objectives of the exercises	No. of participants from government departments	No. of participants from non-government departments	No. of public participants	Expenditure
2023 (six exercises in total)	Test for and enhance Government's preparedness to nuclear incidents	Over 1 200	About 200	0	\$5.87 million
	Participate in the drill under "Government-wide Mobilisation" level organised by the Civil Service Bureau, to test for the efficiency in mobilising civil servants to cope with major incidents	About 10 000	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance government departments' communication and collaboration in various extreme weather conditions	45	9	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance efficiency in handling fallen trees and broken branches in typhoon season	57	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Strengthen and coordinate response capabilities to terrorist attacks and raise public awareness of counter-terrorism	193	0	100	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance handling and rescue capabilities in aircraft incidents	Over 400	Over 600	Over 200	No additional expense to the SB

Year	Objectives of the exercises	No. of participants from government departments	No. of participants from non-government departments	No. of public participants	Expenditure
2024 (12 exercises in total)	Enhance government departments' communication and collaboration in handling water discharged from Shenzhen reservoir	47	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Participate in the second drill under "Government-wide Mobilisation" level organised by the Civil Service Bureau, to test for the efficiency in mobilising civil servants to cope with major incidents	About 10 000	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance government departments' communication and collaboration in various extreme weather conditions	42	8	0	No additional expense to the SB
	To enhance emergency mobilisation and co-ordination mechanism and strengthen the capabilities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to jointly cope with disasters and incidents	320	0	0	No additional expense to the SB

Year	Objectives of the exercises	No. of participants from government departments	No. of participants from non-government departments	No. of public participants	Expenditure
	Enhance efficiency in handling fallen trees and broken branches in typhoon season	59	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Strengthen and coordinate response capabilities to terrorist attacks and raise public awareness of counter-terrorism (two times)	287 and 422 respectively	24 and 10 respectively	0 and 392 respectively	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance handling and rescue capabilities in aircraft incidents	Over 500	Over 800	Over 200	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance government departments' communication and collaboration in tsunami situation	88	4	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Enhance maritime search and rescue capabilities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA	50	0	0	No additional expense to the SB
	Assess the operational readiness of the Kai Tak Sports Park and its surrounding facilities in organising events with maximum attendance (two times)	About 4 800 and about 11 300 respectively	About 160 and about 200 respectively	About 500 and about 1 100 respectively	No additional expense to the SB

Year	Objectives of the exercises	No. of participants from government departments	No. of participants from non-government departments	No. of public participants	Expenditure
2025 (three exercises in total)	Assess the operational readiness of the Kai Tak Sports Park and its surrounding facilities in organising events with maximum attendance (three times)	From about 33 200 to about 48 700	From about 840 to about 880	From about 2 700 to about 26 600	No additional expense to the SB

2) As in the past, the SB will continue to conduct inter-departmental exercises to enhance the communication and collaboration among various government departments under different extreme weather conditions, and the departments' emergency plans will be refined through different scenarios. In addition, the SB and departments will join forces with the relevant authorities in Shenzhen to simulate the forecast of the Shenzhen reservoir water discharge in a bid to test and enhance the communication and cooperation of various government departments. The Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit will also conduct counter-terrorism exercise to strengthen and coordinate response capabilities to terrorist attacks, and to raise public awareness of counter-terrorism. The SB will continue to take stock of a situation and conduct inter-departmental exercises of other types of emergencies to optimize the emergency plans. There are no additional expenses to the SB for the above exercises.

3) and 4)

In 2010, the Guangdong Provincial Maritime Search and Rescue Centre and Hong Kong Marine Department signed the Maritime Search and Rescue Cooperation Arrangement between Hong Kong and Guangdong, implementing resource sharing to enhance the maritime search and rescue emergency response capabilities of both regions. In November 2024, the Guangdong Provincial Maritime Search and Rescue Centre invited the SB, the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre of the Marine Department and other departments as well as the Marine and Water Bureau of Macao, to conduct a comprehensive maritime search and rescue exercise to enhance emergency coordination and rescue by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in maritime incidents.

The SB and the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre of the Marine Department will invite the Guangdong Provincial Maritime Search and Rescue Centre and the Marine and Water Bureau of Macao to participate in a joint maritime search and rescue exercise in Hong Kong in June 2025. The exercise will assess and strengthen the capabilities of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) in handling maritime search and rescue incidents.

Besides, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Emergency Management Co-operation and GBA Emergency Response Operation Co-operation Framework Agreement in Hong Kong in 2024.

Under the aforementioned framework, the Fire and Rescue Corps of Guangdong Province, the Hong Kong Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Macao Fire Services Bureau conducted the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA joint emergency response and rescue exercise codenamed "Liancheng – 2024" in Jiangmen, Guangdong Province in May 2024. The exercise simulated a strong earthquake in Pengjiang District, Jiangmen, which affected a wide range of areas. Multiple buildings collapsed, trapping numerous persons and causing a large number of casualties. The Fire and Rescue Corps of Guangdong Province then requested support from rescue teams across the Mainland. Upon notification of the incident, the fire services teams from Hong Kong and Macao immediately deployed personnel to the affected area to assist the rescue operation. The exercise demonstrated the effective allocation of rescue resources and the emergency response mechanism among the three regions, enhancing the efficiency of cross-border rescue operations.

To further strengthen the emergency response capabilities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA, FSD will conduct a joint exercise codenamed "Liancheng – 2025" with other GBA emergency units in Hong Kong in March 2025. The exercise aims at enhancing emergency mobilisation and co-ordination mechanism among the three regions and demonstrating the spirit of “putting people and life first”. There are no additional expenses to the SB for the above exercises.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB022

(Question Serial No. 0671)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Supplement of the 2024 Policy Address has mentioned that the disciplined services will continue to promote Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education, as well as arrange Mainland exchange activities for members of their youth uniformed groups, so as to enhance young people's sense of belonging to our country and their national pride.

1. Please set out the specific progress of promoting Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education, the detailed progress of the initiative and the detailed budget.
2. Please set out the detailed arrangements of Mainland exchange activities, including the number of such activities, the number of participants, the criteria for selecting destinations and how these activities are integrated with the Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education, so as to achieve the objective of enhancing the sense of belonging to our country?

Asked by: Hon LEE Wai-king, Starry (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

1. The Security Bureau (SB) and its departments have all along been committed to youth development work, and promotion of patriotic education is an integral part of our youth work. One of the major initiatives is the full adoption of Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising ceremonies by youth uniformed groups of the disciplined and auxiliary services departments. The SB also arranges for these youth uniformed groups to participate in flag-raising ceremonies (such as those on the Constitution Day and the National Security Education Day), so as to enhance the members' sense of national identity and sense of belonging to our country.

On this basis, the departments are continuously promoting Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education, which includes organising relevant competitions. For example, the Hong Kong Police Force held the Junior Police Call Flag Raising Competition annually from 2022 to 2024, while the Civil Aid Service held the Chinese-style Foot Drill Competition for its Cadet Corps in 2023 and 2024, so as to further improve the Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising skills of youth members. In addition, the Customs and

Excise Department, the Fire Services Department and the Immigration Department set up Guards of Honour under their youth groups in 2024, and are actively arranging for the youth members to perform ceremonial duties and showcase Chinese-style foot drill in various ceremonies and events.

The departments do not maintain statistical breakdown of their expenditures on Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education.

2. Mainland exchange activities are another important element in our promotion of patriotic education. The SB and its departments have been making proactive efforts in organising Mainland exchange tours for their youth group members. Activities such as visits to law enforcement agencies, technology companies, schools and museums in the Mainland, as well as direct dialogues between the youth members and Mainland youngsters, are arranged to enhance their understanding of the country and foster patriotism.

In 2024, the SB and its departments arranged a total of 75 exchange tours to various cities in the Mainland for over 2 550 youth members. Destinations of these exchange tours include cities in the Guangdong Province (such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Heyuan) and other Mainland cities (such as Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Tianjin, Xi'an, Zhengzhou and Xiamen). In planning the exchange tours, the SB and its departments will select cities with notable characteristics in history, culture, innovation and technology, etc. as destinations. If the itinerary allows, arrangements will also be made for members to attend flag-raising ceremonies in order to enhance their understanding of the country and foster their sense of national pride.

Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising education involves the solemn flag-raising ceremony and the training on foot drill, which emphasises discipline and team spirit. It can enhance youth members' respect for the national anthem and national flag, as well as nurture their affection for the Chinese people. Meanwhile, Mainland exchange activities enable youth members to gain first-hand experience of the country's development and achievements. The integration of the two elements can effectively take forward patriotic education for young people, thereby achieving the objective of enhancing the sense of belonging to our country.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB023

(Question Serial No. 1426)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding non-refoulement claims, will the Government advise this Committee on:

- (1) details of the expenditure involved in non-refoulement claims in the past 3 years;
- (2) nationalities and places of origin of non-refoulement claimants in the past 3 years;
- (3) the percentage of appeals/petitions lodged following rejections by the Immigration Department out of the total number of non-refoulement claims in 2024;
- (4) measures taken by the Immigration Department in maintaining high efficiency in the screening procedures;
- (5) the number of cases involving persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents, the numbers of reports, prosecutions and convictions against such persons and their nationalities in the past 3 years;
- (6) whether there are non-refoulement claimants who have gained rights of abode through marriage with Hong Kong residents during the processing of their cases in the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

- (1) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1,052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1,069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1,159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1,150

* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of the Immigration Department's overall repatriation work, the Immigration Department does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as the Immigration Department (ImmD) and Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

(2) From 2022 up to end-February 2025, the nationality breakdown of the 6 606 non-refoulement claims received by ImmD is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Indonesian	2 192
Indian	992
Vietnamese	984
Bangladeshi	676
Filipino	585
Pakistani	518
Thai	271
Nigerian	60

Nationality	Number of claims
Sri Lankan	37
Other countries	291
Total	6 606

ImmD does not maintain the breakdown by places of origin of the above 6 606 non-refoulement claims received.

(3) In 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD was 2 715. As at end-February 2025, among the above non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD, 2 606 of them have lodged appeal/petition to TCAB, which accounted for 96%.

(4) The average processing time of each claim has been reduced by about 60% from around 25 weeks in the past to around 10 weeks recently. The number of claims pending ImmD's processing also reduced significantly from the peak of more than 11 000 in 2016 to 776 as at end-February 2025. ImmD will continue to optimise the workflow and flexibly deploy internal manpower in handling non-refoulement claims taking into account the actual operation circumstances, as well as continue to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, with a view to ensuring new non-refoulement claim received is handled instantly.

(5) ImmD does not maintain the breakdown of suspected bogus marriage cases involving non-refoulement claimants.

Over the past three years, the number of suspected bogus marriage cases investigated and relevant enforcement actions are tabulated below:

Year	Number of reports	Number of cases investigated	Number of persons arrested	Number of persons convicted
2022	844	383	437	67
2023	1 478	627	898	87
2024	1 533	544	749	58
2025 (up to February)	220	97	142	4
Total	4 075	1 651	2 226	216

(6) Pursuant to section 2(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Immigration Ordinance, a person shall not be treated as ordinarily resident in Hong Kong during any period in which he remains in Hong Kong with or without the authority of the Director¹ after landing unlawfully, or in contravention of any condition of stay. Therefore, non-refoulement claimants shall not be treated as ordinarily resident in Hong Kong when they are pending screening and pending removal.

¹ Pursuant to section 2(1) of the Immigration Ordinance, Director means the Director of Immigration, the Deputy Director of Immigration, any assistant director of immigration and any member of the Immigration Service of the rank of senior principal immigration officer.

Marriage to a Hong Kong permanent resident or Hong Kong resident does not grant a non-resident spouse automatic right to enter or remain in Hong Kong as a dependant. ImmD will consider each application in accordance with the dependant policy.

ImmD does not maintain the relevant figures involved in this question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB024

(Question Serial No. 2324)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The budget for the Programme of “Internal Security” will face a drastic reduction of 52.7%. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) The estimated reduction is mainly related to the decreased cash flow requirement for the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme. What is the exact amount of reduction and its percentage share in the estimated reduction under the Programme? What other areas of work will also face a budget cut?
- (b) How does the Bureau ensure the smooth implementation of the work under the Programme to achieve the aim of maintaining law and order and protecting life and property with the drastic reduction in budget?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

(a) and (b)

Under Programme (2): Internal Security, the estimated expenditure for 2025-26 (\$509.4 million) is \$567.4 million (52.7%) smaller in amount than the revised estimate for 2024-25 (\$1.0768 billion). The reasons are as follows:

(i) Cash flow requirement for the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS)	decreased by \$680 million [#]
(ii) Estimated expenditure for other areas of work	increased by \$112.6 million [^]
Programme (2): Internal Security's total ((i)+(ii))	reduced by \$567.4 million

[#] Exact reduction amount as a percentage share in the estimated reduction under the Programme: 119.8%

[^] The increased estimated expenditure for other areas of work under Programme (2) is mainly due to the Security Bureau's plan to establish the Commissioner's Office to discharge the

duties stipulated in the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Ordinance (the Ordinance) and thus funding is set aside for the salary and operational expenses. The Commissioner's Office is responsible for implementing the brand new legislation and discharging the duties stipulated in the Ordinance, including designating critical infrastructure operators (CI Operators) and critical computer systems, formulating codes of practice, investigating and following up on non-compliance cases, and assisting CI Operators in responding to computer system security incidents. In spite of this, the SB has planned the Commissioner's Office's establishment based on the principles of streamlining manpower and maximising the use of existing resources. In addition, there is an increase in the budget for the operational expenses of other areas of work under Programme (2).

Based on the above, except for the smaller amount in cash flow requirement of the FSWS, there is no budget cut in other areas of work under Programme (2).

In respect of the FSWS, to assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), implemented a \$2 billion FSWS in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the total funding for the FSWS to \$5.5 billion. The implementation of the FSWS requires non-recurrent funding. The URA assists in the administration of the FSWS, including handling applications, disbursing subsidies and monitoring the use of funds. The Government has been releasing funding to the URA in instalments. As at 28 February 2025, a total of \$2.62 billion of funding has been released to the URA. In 2025-26, the amount to be released is expected to be \$100 million.

Regarding the amounts of subsidies, the URA will disburse subsidies to eligible applicants based on the actual progress of completed projects and their compliance with the scheme's requirements. It is estimated that the above funding released by the Government to the URA should be sufficient to meet the cash flow requirement of the URA under the relevant arrangements. As the URA already has sufficient cash flow to meet the relevant needs, the Government's related downward adjustment in the estimated provision for 2025-26 will not affect the financial support provided by the FSWS to owners of old buildings.

As mentioned in the above, except for the smaller amount in cash flow requirement of the FSWS, there is no reduction in the estimated expenditure cut in other areas of work under Programme (2) and thus other work under the Programme will not be affected.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB025

(Question Serial No. 2325)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The salary expenses of 2025-26 is about 9.7% higher than that of 2024-25 (increased from \$208.25 million to \$228.47 million). In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

(a) What are the reasons for the significant increase?

(b) According to the information on changes in staffing provision of each programme, there will be a net increase of 10 posts under the Programme of Internal Security, and a net decrease of 9 posts under the Programme of Immigration Control. Please provide the specific reasons for such changes in posts, and the details of the rank distribution and functional changes.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

(a)

The salary expenses for 2025-26 is higher than the estimate for 2024-25, mainly due to the increased provision required for salary increments and the full-year expenses arising from filling of vacancies, as well as the increased estimate for the expenditure brought about by the creation of new posts and related changes. Please see below for the details.

(b)

Under the Programme of Internal Security

The Programme of Internal Security will see a net increase of 10 posts, mainly due to the Security Bureau (SB)'s plan to establish the Commissioner's Office to discharge the duties stipulated in the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Ordinance (the Ordinance). The Commissioner's Office is responsible for implementing the brand new legislation and discharging the duties stipulated in the Ordinance, including designating critical infrastructure operators (CI Operators) and critical computer systems, formulating codes of practice, investigating and following up on non-compliance cases, and assisting CI Operators in responding to computer-system security incidents. In spite of this, the SB has planned the Commissioner's Office's establishment based on the principles of streamlining manpower and maximising the use of existing resources. The Commissioner's Office will

consist of about 30 staff members, two-thirds of whom are deployed through existing resources, including personnel seconded from the Police Force and the Digital Policy Office.

On the other hand, the Bureau Administration Unit of SB has reduced 1 Clerical Assistant post due to workflow optimisation. After offsetting, there is a net increase of 10 posts under the Programme of Internal Security.

Under the Programme of Immigration Control

On the other hand, under the Programme of Immigration Control, in view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, SB launched the “Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants” (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the “Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims” operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme and the Immigration Department and Torture Claims Appeal Board stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the 9 posts originally in the Pilot Scheme Office (namely 1 Senior Executive Officer, 3 Executive Officer I, 4 Assistant Clerical Officer and 1 Workman II posts) will be deleted.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB026

(Question Serial No. 2326)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Estimates that the Security Bureau will “continue to put into effect relevant recommendations on anti-money laundering of the Financial Action Task Force with respect to certain designated non-financial businesses and professionals” in 2025-26. This initiative was already mentioned in the 2024-25 Estimates. Given Hong Kong’s status as a global financial centre, effective anti-money laundering measures are crucial for safeguarding the integrity of the financial system and our international reputation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) What new or enhanced anti-money laundering measures does the Security Bureau plan to adopt in 2025-26? In particular, how will the regulation of “designated non-financial businesses and professionals” be further strengthened?
- (b) What are the specific implications of these anti-money laundering efforts on the staffing establishment and funding allocation of the Security Bureau? Are there additional dedicated staff or units assigned to handle the relevant work?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

The amended Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) (AMLO) became effective on 1 March 2018, requiring 4 designated non-financial businesses and professionals (DNFBPs) (Note 1) (including lawyers, accountants, real estate agents and trust or company service providers) to carry out measures of conducting customer due diligence and keeping records when engaging in specified transactions, for implementing the relevant Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations. The Government amended the AMLO again in 2022, which introduced the regulation of dealers in precious metals and stones (DPMS). The DPMS registration regime has been implemented from 1 April 2023 with a view to enhancing the anti-money laundering regime.

Hong Kong has designated authorities to investigate money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF) offences and has equipped them with the necessary powers. The primary investigative authorities are the Hong Kong Police Force and the Customs and Excise

Department, whilst the Independent Commission Against Corruption will investigate ML and TF cases undertaken through corruption.

To implement FATF recommendations on anti-money laundering with respect to DNFBPs, Security Bureau (SB) will continue to maintain close liaison with designated authorities and regulatory bodies to understand their latest work concerning anti-money laundering supervision on these sectors. SB will also co-organise seminars/online seminar with the regulatory bodies of DNFBPs from time to time to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory requirements and FATF recommendations. Under Head 151, since the staff members concerned in the SB have to undertake other duties as well, the relevant resources cannot be calculated and quantified separately.

(Note 1) According to the Financial Action Task Force, DNFBPs include casinos, real estate agents, lawyers, accountants, trust or company service providers, as well as dealers in precious metals and stones. As there is no casino in Hong Kong, the relevant recommendations are only applicable to the remaining 5 sectors. Regarding policy related to supervision of DNFBPs, Security Bureau is responsible for 4 of the sectors including real estate agents, lawyers, accountants and dealers in precious metals and stones.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB027

(Question Serial No. 2327)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Budget that in 2025-26 the Security Bureau will continue to oversee the expansion of detention capacity which is associated with the implementation of a series of support measures on healthcare services, staffing and safeguards for the rights of detainees, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) How many detention places does the Government plan to increase? What are the geographical distribution of and detailed planning for the facilities? Will the expansion plan be carried out in phases or completed within a specific timeframe?
- (b) What is the total estimated expenditure on the expansion of detention capacity? Please specify the allocation of provision, including a breakdown of the cost infrastructure projects, the cost of facility upgrade, staff recruitment and training expenses, as well as the cost of healthcare facilities and services.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

(a) – (b) The Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as the Immigration Department (ImmD)'s detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively and, together with the existing Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants has increased to three, raising the detention capacity to 900.

In addition, the Government will continue to strengthen ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. On 1 April 2025, the in-situ expansion in NKCI was completed, which provided 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%). The overall detention capacity has been increased to 940. The total expenditures for the project is about \$2.65 million.

NKCI is an institution managed by the Correctional Services Department (CSD), for which CSD will deploy its existing manpower to manage the additional detention places. As the management of NKCI forms part of the daily management work of CSD, CSD does not maintain the breakdown mentioned in this question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB028

(Question Serial No. 2135)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Government will continue to oversee the gradual opening of the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Frontier Closed Area (except Chung Ying Street). In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) Regarding the opening of the STK Frontier Closed Area last year and in the coming year, what are the details of the expenditures and staffing provisions involved?
- (b) While promoting cultural and eco-tourism, it is necessary to ensure that adequate security controls are in place. In this connection, what specific measures does the Bureau have to co-ordinate and communicate with other relevant government departments, as well as stakeholders such as residents and the trade? Are there any inter-departmental liaison/working groups, joint meetings or key performance indicators (KPIs) for the relevant consultation work?

Asked by: Hon NG Chau-pei, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

- (a) The Sha Tau Kok (STK) opening-up plan is part of the overall work of the Security Bureau (SB). A breakdown of the relevant staff establishment and expenditure is not available.
- (b) Since 2022, the SB has, in collaboration with relevant bureaux and departments, formulated specific measures to progressively open up the Frontier Closed Area at STK, such as raising gradually the daily visitor quota, increasing the frequency of the public transport connecting STK to Sheung Shui and Fanling, and utilising the vehicle holding area inside the STK Boundary Control Point, which is pending redevelopment, as a short-term tenancy car park. We have fully consulted the local community in the process, including the newly established District Consultative Committee, which comprises representatives from relevant government departments and the local community (including representatives from the STK District Rural Committee, North District Council members and village representatives, etc.); the STK District Rural Committee; and the North District Council, in order to gauge the views of stakeholders on the opening-up plan and to make sure that the plan will not affect the lifestyle of STK residents or cause security problems. The Government will continue to

closely monitor the implementation of the plan and maintain close liaison with relevant stakeholders in order for the opening-up plan to be implemented in an orderly manner.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB029

(Question Serial No. 0948)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the recruitment and talent retention efforts of various disciplined services in recent years, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Regarding the recruitment of the disciplined services (rank and file), please list the annual staff establishments of Police Constable, Assistant Officer II, Customs Officer, Immigration Assistant, Fireman/Firewoman (Operational/Marine) and Ambulanceman/Ambulancewoman, and their annual numbers of applicants, those who attended final interviews, issued with appointment letters, eventually assumed duty, and those successfully completed basic training courses at training schools over the past 3 years;

2. Regarding the recruitment of the disciplined services (officer), please list the annual staff establishments of Police Inspector, Officer of Correctional Services Department, Customs Inspector, Immigration Officer, Station Officer (Operational/Marine) and Ambulance Officer, and their annual numbers of applicants, those who attended final interviews, issued with appointment letters, eventually assumed duty, and those successfully completed basic training courses at training schools over the past 3 years;

3. Regarding the recruitment of the disciplined services (both rank and file and officer ranks) over the past 3 years, among the applicants and those issued with appointment letters, please provide the annual numbers of applicants who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds; and

4. Regarding the talent retention efforts within disciplined services (both rank and file and officer ranks) over the past 3 years, please provide the annual resignation figures for each disciplined service.

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

1. During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the annual staff establishments of the disciplined services (rank and file) posts concerned are as follows:

Department	Post	Staff establishment ^{Note 1}		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Correctional Services Department (CSD)	Assistant Officer II	3 006	2 994	2 994
Customs and Excise Department (C&ED)	Customs Officer	2 931	3 026	3 044
Fire Services Department (FSD)	Fireman/Firewoman (Operational/Marine)	3 698	3 721	3 696
	Ambulanceman/Ambulancewoman	2 014	2 018	2 032
Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)	Police Constable	22 527	22 510	22 625
Immigration Department (ImmD)	Immigration Assistant	1 347	1 285	1 287

Note 1: It refers to the establishment of the department as at 1 April at the beginning of the year.

During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the annual numbers of applicants, those attended final interviews, issued with appointment letters, eventually assumed duty, and those successfully completed basic training courses at training schools ^{Note 2} of the disciplined services (rank and file) posts concerned are as follows:

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
CSD	Assistant Officer II			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	4 306	4 658	4 026
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	675	1 104	976
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	255	367	341
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	181	306	292
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	172	237	276
C&ED	Customs Officer			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	7 501	8 737	8 943
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	1 050	1 179	1 095

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	97	215	269
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	85	193	264
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	79	178	115
FSD	Fireman/Firewoman (Operational/Marine)			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	2 280	2 585	_Note 3
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	717	889	_Note 3
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	361	373	89
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	359	317	193
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	297	323	227
	Ambulanceman/ Ambulancewoman			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	958	2 183	829
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	129	522	_Note 4
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	156	184	90
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	162	155	76
		<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	169	136
HKPF	Police Constable			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	4 606	6 647	6 491
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	1 846	2 779	2 546
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	567	828	826
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	554	818	817
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	392	569	834
ImmD	Immigration Assistant			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	8 538	8 968	9 487
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	1 396	899	775
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	259	286	155
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	237	271	180

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	142	213	187

Note 2: The selection process, appointment procedures and training courses may span across different financial years. As a result, the “number of applicants”, and those “attended final interviews”, “issued with appointment letters”, “eventually assumed duty” and “successfully completed basic training courses at training schools” of individual departments may not refer to the same group of people and should not be directly compared.

Note 3: No recruitment exercise for the year.

Note 4: The recruitment exercise for Ambulanceman/Ambulancewoman launched during 2024-25 is still in progress.

2. During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the annual staff establishments of the disciplined services (officer) posts concerned are as follows:

Department	Post	Staff establishment ^{Note 1}		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
CSD	Officer	701	699	726
C&ED	Customs Inspector	597	621	628
FSD	Station Officer (Operational/Marine)	884	902	897
	Ambulance Officer	115	116	111
HKPF	Police Inspector	2 200	2 201	2 209
ImmD	Immigration Officer	1 753	1 572	1 597

During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the annual numbers of applicants, those attended final interviews, issued with appointment letters, eventually assumed duty, and those successfully completed basic training courses at training schools ^{Note 2} of the disciplined services (officer) posts concerned are as follows:

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
CSD	Officer			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	2 380	2 516 ^{Note 5}	_{Note 3}
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	210	_{Note 5}	194 ^{Note 5}
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	5	74	41
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	6	56	20

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	51	18	35
C&ED	Customs Inspector			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	4 782	8 025	8 427
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	351	538	431
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	64	137	27
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	62	126	19 ^{Note 6}
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	62	123	8
FSD	Station Officer (Operational/Marine)			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	2 036	2 981	2 849
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	94	143	59
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	55	44	58
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	55	45	55
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	49	45	36
	Ambulance Officer			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	_{Note 3}	1 267	_{Note 3}
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	_{Note 3}	37	_{Note 3}
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	6	_{Note 7}	15
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	5	_{Note 7}	15
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	5	_{Note 7}	9
HKPF	Police Inspector			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	3 391	5 051	5 129
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	366	491	611
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	167	157	149
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	165	157	148
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	157	145	148
ImmD	Immigration Officer			
	<i>Number of applicants</i>	5 398	7 131	8 468
	<i>Attended final interviews</i>	702	778	952

Department	Post	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
	<i>Issued with appointment letters</i>	74	172	95
	<i>Eventually assumed duty</i>	73	170	92
	<i>Successfully completed basic training courses at training schools</i>	70	131	76

Note 5: In light of the epidemic, the recruitment exercise for CSD Officer, which is usually conducted at the beginning of the year, was postponed to October 2023 for the year 2023-24. As a result, the final interview for the 2023-24 batch had to be deferred to April-May 2024.

Note 6: 4 undergraduates who received conditional offers have accepted the appointment and will assume duty after graduation from university.

Note 7: The applicants of the concerned year's recruitment exercise received offers in 2024-25.

3. During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, among the applicants of the disciplined services (both rank and file and officer ranks), the annual numbers of applicants who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds are as follows:

Department	Rank	Number of applicants (who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
CSD	Rank and file	4 306 (-)Note 8	4 658 (-)Note 8	4 026 (-)Note 8
	Officer	2 380 (-)Note 8	2 516 (-)Note 8	_Note 3
C&ED	Rank and file	7 501 (-)Note 8	8 737 (-)Note 8	8 943 (-)Note 8
	Officer	4 782 (-)Note 8	8 025 (286)	8 427 (336)
FSD	Rank and file	3 238 (4)	8 033 (14)	3 572 (14)
	Officer	2 036 (2)	4 248 (4)	2 849 (2)
HKPF	Rank and file	4 606 (89)	6 647 (492)	6 491 (756)
	Officer	3 391 (11)	5 051 (278)	5 129 (291)

Department	Rank	Number of applicants (who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
ImmD	Rank and file	8 538 (131)	8 968 (326)	9 487 (528)
	Officer	5 398 (91)	7 131 (259)	8 468 (488)
Government Flying Services (GFS)	Officer	1 654 (-) ^{Note 8}	836 (-) ^{Note 8}	1 729 (-) ^{Note 8}

Note 8: The department does not maintain statistics on the number of applicants who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds.

During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, among the applicants of the disciplined services (both rank and file and officer ranks) issued with appointment letters, the annual numbers of applicants who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds are as follows:

Department	Rank	Number of applicants issued with appointment letters (who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
CSD	Rank and file	255 (-) ^{Note 8}	367 (-) ^{Note 8}	341 (-) ^{Note 8}
	Officer	5 (-) ^{Note 8}	74 (-) ^{Note 8}	41 (-) ^{Note 8}
C&ED	Rank and file	97 (-) ^{Note 8}	215 (-) ^{Note 8}	269 (-) ^{Note 8}
	Officer	64 (-) ^{Note 8}	137 (1)	27 (2)
FSD	Rank and file	530 (2)	586 (1)	204 (1)
	Officer	61 (0)	44 (0)	73 (2)
HKPF	Rank and file	567 (0)	828 (46)	826 (153)
	Officer	167 (0)	157 (0)	149 (2)
ImmD	Rank and file	259 (6)	286 (14)	155 (0)

Department	Rank	Number of applicants issued with appointment letters (who have Mainland university graduate backgrounds)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
	Officer	74 (3)	172 (2)	95 (2)
GFS	Officer	12 (0)	26 (0)	6 (0)

(4) During the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the annual resignation figures of each disciplined service (both rank and file and officer ranks) are as follows:

Department	Rank	Number of resignations		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 [as at 28 February 2025]
CSD	Rank and file	66	73	74
	Officer	16	15	14
C&ED	Rank and file	93	72	57
	Officer	21	23	14
FSD	Rank and file	192	161	141
	Officer	12	26	24
HKPF	Rank and file	193	215	216
	Officer	32	19	31
ImmD	Rank and file	107	83	50
	Officer	30	39	22
GFS	Officer	7	12	6

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB030

(Question Serial No. 2768)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the screening of non-refoulement claims in the past 3 years:

1. how many claims were received and what were the nationalities involved;
2. how many cases were substantiated and unsubstantiated respectively;
3. how many cases were determined, withdrawn or where “no further action could be taken” respectively;
4. how many cases are pending screening;
5. how many unsubstantiated non-refoulement claimants were repatriated and the expenditures involved in the past 3 years? What were the major difficulties in case handling?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

(1) – (4) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

As at end-February 2025, ImmD received 28 154 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 491
Indonesian	5 361
Indian	4 618
Pakistani	3 251
Bangladeshi	2 546
Filipino	2 259
Nepalese	511
Thai	486
Nigerian	294
Other countries	2 337
Total	28 154

Among the 26 790 claims determined by ImmD, 334 were substantiated (including 244 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(5) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1,052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1,069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1,159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1,150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of PFLA estimated expenditure. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and TCAB stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimates for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

Over the past three years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398
Total	5 500

The Government spares no efforts in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong in accordance with the law, but removal inevitably involves factors which

are beyond the full control of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, given that a number of unsubstantiated claimants have lodged applications for leave to apply for judicial review to the Court in recent years; the time required by the relevant Consulates-General of the major source countries to process re-entry travel documents; and the uncooperativeness of the claimants in the application of the re-entry travel documents or during ImmD's removal operations, etc.

The Government has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, including maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders such as the Consulates-General and airlines and arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations as and when necessary and where the situation permits. For instance, ImmD has deployed officers to conduct a total of 32 removal operations since November 2022 with in-flight escort for unsubstantiated claimants who were highly uncooperative and put up strong resistance so as to implement forced repatriation and counter the delaying tactics of unsubstantiated claimants. During the same period, ImmD also carried out 21 large-scale removal operations, through which a total of 494 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong. At end-August 2023, the Secretary for Security also paid a visit to Vietnam to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by ImmD of Hong Kong and the Immigration Department of Vietnam, which covers, among others, enhanced co-operation of both parties in respect of verification and repatriation of non-refoulement claimants.

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB031

(Question Serial No. 2769)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Government has launched various measures, including implementation of the updated removal policy, launch of the Advance Passenger Information system and strengthened collaboration with nearby regions to intercept illegal immigrants, to combat the abuse of the non-refoulement claim mechanism. Is there any improvement in the efficiency in removing unsubstantiated claimants and intercepting potential non-refoulement claimants? What measures are in place to further prevent and combat the abuse of the non-refoulement claim mechanism?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The Government attaches great importance to non-refoulement claim issue and has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, so as to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism being abused under a multi-pronged approach. Relevant measures include:

- (a) Enhancing intelligence exchange: To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the HKSAR Government will continue stepping up tripartite intelligence exchanges with relevant law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and Macao. The Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force have also collaborated with Mainland authorities to proactively strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal immigration activities of NEC persons. Under the continuous efforts from various parties in combatting smuggling activities, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has gradually reduced since the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure for February 2025 (i.e. 34 people) fell by more than 90% when compared with the peak of 364 in October 2023;
- (b) Interception at source: The Government has rolled out the Advance Passenger Information (API) system in phases since 3 September 2024. As at end-February 2025, 86 airline

operators have been connected to the system, which accounted for 60% of the overall airline operators, including Hong Kong-based airline operators, such as the Cathay Pacific Airways, the Hong Kong Airlines, the Greater Bay Airlines and the Hong Kong Express Airways, etc. As for the around 60 remaining airline operators, ImmD will continue to maintain close communication with them with a view to ensuring that relevant system connection works will be completed in an orderly manner before 1 September 2025. In just a few months of operation, the API system has been effective in successfully identifying and denying boarding of flights by ineligible persons, including persons who had lodged non-refoulement claims in Hong Kong but were eventually rejected and repatriated to their places of origin.

- (c) Screening non-refoulement claims: ImmD has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, including handling each new non-refoulement claim received instantly;
- (d) Processing of claim-related appeals: the Torture Claims Appeal Board has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases. Currently, the average processing time of an appeal case has been reduced from over seven months in the past to about four months;
- (e) Detention: The Government will continue to reinforce ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. In addition to the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively, thereby increasing the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants to three. Moreover, on 1 April 2025, the in-situ expansion in NKCI was completed, which provided 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%). The overall detention capacity has been increased to 940;
- (f) Combating illegal employment: To reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, ImmD and relevant law enforcement agencies have continued to take vigorous actions against illegal employment in a proactive manner, with the target of conducting no less than 13 200 operations on targeted establishments every year, in order to reduce the economic incentives for claimants;
- (g) Claims lodged by foreign domestic helpers (FDHs): As quite a number of non-refoulement claimants had been employed as FDHs prior to lodging their claims, the Security Bureau and ImmD have been collaborating and will continue to proactively collaborate with the relevant Consulates General in Hong Kong to step up publicity and education for newly arrived FDHs, impressing upon them that the non-refoulement claim mechanism should not be abused and that working illegally in Hong Kong is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment. With the Government's strengthened publicity efforts, only 22% of new claims received in 2024 were raised by former FDHs, down from 58% during the peak in 2022; and
- (h) Removal: The updated removal policy came into effect on 7 December 2022. ImmD could proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-

refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. The Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants. In 2024, 2 219 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong, surpassing that year's target by 68% (i.e. removing not less than 1 320 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong).

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB032

(Question Serial No. 2770)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Currently, the Immigration Department will issue a recognizance form (commonly known as “going-out pass”) to non-refoulement claimants while processing their claims and they can temporarily stay in Hong Kong. In this connection, please inform this Committee:

1. of the current number of claimants in Hong Kong, with a breakdown by (a) nationality, (b) nature of stay (i.e. illegal immigrants, overstayed or refused entrants), and (c) status of claim (such as pending screening, pending appeal, and pending judicial review);
2. of the respective numbers of claimants who were arrested, prosecuted and convicted for committing criminal offences during their stay in Hong Kong, with a breakdown by police district and category of crimes; and
3. of the staffing provision, administrative fee and expenses of legal assistance involved.

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

(1) According to the information of the Immigration Department (ImmD), as at end-February 2025, there were around 15 800 claimants remaining in Hong Kong, including about 800 claimants with their claims pending determination by ImmD, about 900 claimants with their appeals against ImmD’s decision pending determination by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB), about 8 800 claimants with on-going applications to the Court of First Instance for judicial review after their claims/appeals were rejected/dismissed by ImmD/TCAB or other litigation proceedings, as well as about 1 900 claimants being imprisoned, remanded, involved in ongoing prosecution or investigation process, or remaining in Hong Kong due to other reasons. For the 3 400 or so remaining claimants, removal was being arranged. The breakdowns by nationality and status in Hong Kong of the aforesaid non-refoulement claimants are tabulated below:

Nationality	Number of claimants (as at end-February 2025)
Indonesian	3 181
Vietnamese	2 975
Pakistani	2 294

Nationality	Number of claimants (as at end-February 2025)
Indian	2 209
Bangladeshi	1 872
Filipino	1 387
Thai	290
Sri Lankan	257
Nigerian	253
Others	1 096
Total	15 814

Status in Hong Kong	Number of claimants (as at end-February 2025)
Illegal immigrants	6 565
Overstayers	7 853
Others	1 396
Total	15 814

(2) According to the Police's record, since 2020 and up to end-2024, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by police region/police district:

Police region/police district	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island Region	167	183	158	150	126
Central District	31	36	47	36	31
Wan Chai District	80	85	73	69	39
Western District	34	31	22	19	28
Eastern District	22	31	16	26	28
Kowloon East Region	22	45	23	41	36
Wong Tai Sin District	9	13	5	12	9
Sau Mau Ping District	4	9	6	10	14
Kwun Tong District	3	11	5	10	6
Tseung Kwan O District	6	12	7	9	7
Kowloon West Region	564	514	365	386	434
Yau Tsim District	243	226	155	192	190
Mong Kok District	107	99	65	61	77
Sham Shui Po District	149	117	98	94	102
Kowloon City District	65	72	47	39	65
New Territories North Region	137	133	121	117	143
Border District	5	9	2	0	5
Yuen Long District	102	91	89	83	101
Tuen Mun District	28	24	27	28	28
Tai Po District	2	9	3	6	9
New Territories South Region	43	53	19	42	45
Tsuen Wan District	21	17	8	11	9
Shatin District	9	10	1	7	12

Police region/police district	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Kwai Tsing District	11	17	5	14	15
Lantau District	2	8	3	8	7
Airport District	0	1	2	2	2
Marine Region	1	1	1	9	2
Hong Kong overall	934	929	687	745	786

Since 2020 and up to end-2024, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Shop theft	250	254	145	193	176
Miscellaneous thefts	98	134	99	71	96
Wounding and serious assault	92	90	51	75	76
Serious drug offences (Note 1)	112	92	85	99	63
Disorder/fighting in public places	18	33	44	42	48
Criminal damage	36	37	25	33	47
Burglary	36	22	27	18	27
Serious immigration offences (Note 2)	38	50	29	38	24
Others (Note 3)	254	217	182	176	229
Total	934	929	687	745	786

Note 1: “Serious drug offences” include possession of dangerous drugs exceeding a specified amount (i.e. possession of drugs, such as 5 grams of cocaine/heroin/marijuana, etc.), manufacturing dangerous drugs, trafficking of dangerous drugs, etc.

Note 2: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person.

Note 3: “Others” include forgery and coinage, robbery, possession of offensive weapon and pickpocketing etc.

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2020, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2020	156
2021	438
2022	454
2023	484
2024	363
2025 (January to February)	48

The law enforcement departments have not maintained prosecution and conviction figures concerning non-refoulement claimants.

(3) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2020-21	311	47	95	540	992
2021-22	298	47	142	579	1 067
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and TCAB stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-

25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2020-21	207	72	73	36
2021-22	207	72	73	36
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	75	35
2024-25	207	81	73 [^]	35
2025-26 (Estimate)	207	81	73 [^]	35

* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2025, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2020-21, the non-civil servant posts in the Duty Lawyer Scheme are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	1	2	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	6	5	5	5	6	6
Court Liaison Officer	13	17	22	17	32	32
Senior Personal Secretary	4	2	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	4	4	4	6	6
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1

Rank	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Office Assistant	2	1	1	1	2	2
Total	35	34	39	34	53	53

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office since 2020-21 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26
Civil Servant posts						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	0
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	0
Workman II	2	1	1	1	1	0
Non-civil servant posts						
Number	5	5	5	4	0	0
Total	16	15	15	14	10[^]	0[^]

[^] PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. Therefore, the Government has since 2024-25 commenced to reduce the number of civil servant and non-civil servant staff in the Pilot Scheme Office.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB033****(Question Serial No. 2783)**Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security BureauSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (2) Internal SecurityControlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Regarding crimes related to sexual offences, will the Government advise on the following:

1. What were the total number of sexual offence cases and the number of sexual offence cases involving children and young people in the past 3 years?
2. The Government has announced its plan to implement, by 2025, the relevant legislative amendments concerning sexual offences reviewed in the reports published by the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong in 2019 and 2022 respectively (i.e. the report on the Review of Substantive Sexual Offences and the report on Sentencing and Related Matters in the Review of Sexual Offences). What are the progress, expenditure and timetable concerning the relevant work?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)Reply:

1. The total number of sexual offence cases received by the Hong Kong Police Force and those involving victims under the age of 17 in the past 3 years are as follows:

Year	Sexual offence cases ^[Note]	
	Total number of cases	Number of cases involving victims under the age of 17
2022	1 208	578
2023	1 412	696
2024	1 454	663

[Note]: including rape, indecent assault, unlawful sexual intercourse, gross indecency, incest, unlawful buggery, etc.

2. The Law Reform Commission (LRC) published a report on the Review of Substantive Sexual Offences in December 2019 and, subsequently in May 2022, a report on Sentencing and Related Matters in the Review of Sexual Offences. The two reports cover the subjects of four consultation papers of the LRC in the past ten-odd years, including rape and other non-consensual sexual offences, sexual offences involving children and persons with mental impairment, miscellaneous sexual offences, and sentencing and related matters in the review of sexual offences. The two reports have extensive coverage and contain over 70 recommendations. The Government is studying the recommendations in the reports and will propose legislative amendments with reference to the development of relevant laws in other jurisdictions. The Government plans to conduct public consultation on the proposed legislative amendments concerning the two reports within 2025, and will submit the amendment proposals to the Legislative Council for consideration at a suitable juncture.

The legislative work will be absorbed by the regular manpower and resources of the Security Bureau and relevant departments. A statistical breakdown is not maintained.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB034

(Question Serial No. 2184)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Estimates stated that “the Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants will retire on 1 April 2025”. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

(a) What are the major changes brought about by switching from the Pilot Scheme to the Duty Lawyer Service in terms of service scope, number of people covered, and projected changes in caseload?

(b) What were the number of non-refoulement claim cases processed in 2024-25 by the Pilot Scheme and the Duty Lawyer Service, the success rate and the average handling costs per case? What is the average handling cost per case expected in 2025-26? What are the costs incurred in various stages of the screening process (such as handling of legal documents and translation services)?

(c) What measures are in place to prevent abuse of the Duty Lawyer Service?

(d) Please tabulate the following since 2021: the number of non-refoulement claims received every year, and among them, the number of claimants remained stranded in Hong Kong, the rate of substantiated cases, the number and rate of completed removal, and the number of non-refoulement claimants having committed criminal offences.

(e) Regarding non-refoulement claimants who are suspected of having committed criminal offences, in which detention facilities are they being detained? What is the average annual cost per claimant under detention in the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

(a) – (c) In *FB v Director of Immigration and Secretary for Security* ([2009] 2 HKLRD 346), the Court of First Instance of the High Court ruled that the Government must provide publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) to claimants who lack economic means during the screening process, so as to meet the high standards of fairness as required by the Court. The Government has been engaging the Duty Lawyer Service (DLS) since 2009 to operate the “Legal Assistance Scheme for Convention Against Torture Claims” (renamed as “Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-Refoulement Claims” (Duty Lawyer Scheme) subsequent to the

commencement of the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014). In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the “Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants” (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the Duty Lawyer Scheme to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable.

The scope of assistance of the above two schemes are identical, which includes (i) advising the claimant of his legal rights and providing procedural guidance throughout the screening process; (ii) assisting the claimant to complete the claim form; (iii) accompanying the claimant to attend the screening interview(s) conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD), if considered necessary by the lawyer; (iv) assessing merits of appeal for claims rejected by ImmD; (v) preparing notice of appeal to the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) for meritorious cases; (vi) representing the claimant at the oral hearing on appeal where necessary; (vii) assisting the claimant in making a request to re-open a claim or to make a subsequent claim in meritorious cases; and (viii) preparing an objection notice on revocation for the claimant in meritorious cases. There will be around 3 200 referrals (i.e. around 13 referrals per day) to the two schemes in 2024-25, and the revised estimate expenditure is \$146 million.

With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and TCAB stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in the recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. The number of referrals in 2025-26 will be similar to that in 2024-25. The Government has all along been monitoring and will continue to monitor the PFLA expenditure to ensure the proper use of public money.

According to ImmD’s information, as at end-February 2025, the substantiation rate of non-refoulement claims is around 1.2%. The Government does not maintain the cost of each stage in the screening process.

(d) The Government implemented the USM in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

According to ImmD's information, as at end-February 2025, there are around 15 800 non-refoulement claimants remaining in Hong Kong, and the substantiation rate of non-refoulement claims is around 1.2%.

Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398
Total	6 885

According to Police's record, since 2020 and up to end-2024, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below:

Year	Number of persons arrested
2020	934
2021	929
2022	687
2023	745
2024	786
Total	4 081

(e) Generally, arrested persons who are suspected of committing a criminal offence, including non-refoulement claimants, would be detained in Police detention facilities during their detention period. The relevant costs form part of the Police's daily operation and the Police does not maintain the breakdown of relevant expenditures.

As for the Correctional Services Department (CSD), depending on their individual circumstances, non-refoulement claimants who are suspected of committing a criminal offence would be remanded in custody in nine correctional institutions, including Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, Stanley Prison, Tung Tau Correctional Institution, Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution, Pik Uk Correctional Institution, Tai Lam Centre for Women, Lo Wu Correctional Institution, Lai King Correctional Institution or Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre. The detention of non-refoulement claimants who are suspected of committing a criminal offence forms part of CSD's daily management work and CSD does not maintain the breakdown of relevant expenditures.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB035

(Question Serial No. 2186)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Budget that the Security Bureau will continue to oversee the provision of practical assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and the promotion of our country's consular protection. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

(a) How does the Government systematically assess the effectiveness of the work on consular protection outside Chinese territory? Please elaborate on the relevant key performance indicators (KPIs), and how the relevant data are collected and analysed. Specifically, will analyses of the proportion of successful assistance cases, average processing time and specific means of assistance be performed? How can the assessment results be applied to enhance consular protection services?

(b) Does the Government conduct regular surveys to gauge public satisfaction with consular protection services? What are the contents, methodologies and frequencies of the surveys? How can the survey outcomes be applied to improve service quality?

(c) Please provide specific details on the utilisation of the Outbound Travel Alert System and the Registration of Outbound Travel Information Service, including the approximate user counts per month. What measures will the Government adopt to encourage more members of the public to register before travelling abroad? What specific plans does the Government have to enhance these services in 2025-26?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

(a) & (b) Our country provides consular protection services to Chinese citizens (including Hong Kong residents of Chinese nationality) around the world through over 280 Chinese diplomatic and consular missions (CDCMs) overseas to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests overseas. Over the years, the Immigration Department (ImmD) maintains close communication with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the CDCMs overseas, and cooperates with relevant HKSAR Government departments (such as the Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas) with a view to providing practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. Hong Kong

residents in distress outside Hong Kong may seek assistance from the local CDCMs directly or through the ImmD.

The Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the ImmD has been providing 24-hour round-the-clock practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. As the pandemic subsided and the number of people travelling abroad has gradually increased, the number of assistance requests received by the AHU is also on the rise. The emergency situations encountered by Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong have also become more diversified thereby giving rise to different types of service needs. In view of the uniqueness of individual assistance request and that the assistance provided by AHU would vary, it is not suitable to quantify and assess the AHU's working efficiency using Key Performance Indicator. In general, upon receipt of assistance requests, the ImmD will liaise with the OCMFA and the CDCMs to understand the case's nature and situation and requests of the assistance seeker with a view to providing practicable and appropriate assistance.

The assistance provided by the AHU to Hong Kong residents over the years cover various aspects, examples include assisting in the applications for replacement of travel documents, providing urgent assistance to Hong Kong residents hospitalized / suffering from illnesses or those who have encountered traffic accidents outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents arrested / imprisoned outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents stranded outside Hong Kong due to major emergency incidents to return to Hong Kong safely, and assisting Hong Kong residents who had become victims of incidents outside Hong Kong, etc. In fact, the AHU has received positive feedback from the assistance seekers expressing their gratitude to the assistance provided as well as recognition of the AHU's work. The ImmD will continue to maintain close communication with the OCMFA and CDCMs to review the services provided and relevant works procedure for continuous service improvement.

In addition, the ImmD has been joining hands with the OCMFA in organising various activities and taking forward publicity work, with a view to increasing the awareness of outbound travel safety of Hong Kong residents as well as their understanding of national consular protection and the AHU's work. Through publicity activities, the ImmD will also take the opportunity to reach out to the public to understand their views on relevant publicity and promotion work, as well as the AHU's work with a view to further improving service quality.

(c) The Security Bureau (SB) established the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System in 2009, which mainly takes into consideration the personal safety risks in travelling to overseas countries/territories as the assessment basis. The OTA System uses Black, Red and Amber alert levels to facilitate the public to better understand the possible risks to personal safety when travelling overseas. Currently, the OTA System covers 88 countries/territories that are more popular destinations for Hong Kong residents for travel or business. Regular reviews are conducted to reflect the latest situations. As for overseas countries that are not covered by the OTA System, hyperlinks to the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China are also provided on the SB's OTA webpage to facilitate public access to the information relating to travel risks. Apart from issuing OTAs, the SB will also, depending on the situation, disseminate useful information that the public should pay attention to when travelling overseas via its website and/or mobile application.

The Registration of Outbound Travel Information (ROTI) service was launched on 6 December 2010 enabling Hong Kong residents to register their contact details and itinerary outside Hong Kong before departure. The information provided will facilitate the ImmD in contacting and providing assistance to Hong Kong residents in the event of an emergency outside Hong Kong. In 2024, there was a total of 4 539 people used the ROTI service, representing an increase of 62% when comparing with 2 804 people in 2023. To provide better public services, the ImmD will conduct reviews on its services from time to time and make appropriate modifications where necessary, and will continue to promote and enhance public's awareness on the ROTI service through publicity activities.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB036****(Question Serial No. 2801)**Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security BureauSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Immigration ControlControlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

1. What is the amount of public funds to be allocated by the HKSAR Government to cover the cost involved under the non-refoulement claim mechanism in the 2025-26 financial year?
2. What is the rate of change as compared with the expenditure in 2024-25?
3. In the new financial year, what government policies are in place to streamline the procedures and expedite the processing of backlog cases, thereby reducing the period of stay of non-refoulement claim applicants and appellants in Hong Kong and speeding up the removal process? What is the estimated amount of public funds to be saved due to the relevant work?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)Reply:

(1) – (3) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2024-25 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of

the Immigration Department's overall repatriation work, the Immigration Department does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as the Immigration Department (ImmD) and Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

(3) The Government attaches great importance to the non-refoulement claim issue and has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, so as to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism being abused under a multi-pronged approach. Relevant measures include:

- (a) Enhancing intelligence exchange: To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the HKSAR Government will continue stepping up tripartite intelligence exchanges with relevant law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and Macao. ImmD and the Hong Kong Police Force have also collaborated with Mainland authorities to proactively strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal immigration activities of NEC IIs;
- (b) Interception at source: To prevent potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong, the Secretary for Security made the Immigration (Advance Passenger Information) Regulation under the Immigration

Ordinance in March 2023 to specify that airline operators must provide the advance passenger information (API) data and aircraft information of every traveller through the API system prior to a flight's departure for Hong Kong. ImmD has launched the API system by phases since September 2024 and will complete its implementation in September 2025;

- (c) Screening non-refoulement claims: ImmD has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, including handling each new non-refoulement claim received instantly;
- (d) Processing of claim-related appeals: TCAB has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases. Currently, the average processing time of an appeal case has been reduced from over seven months in the past to about four months;
- (e) Detention: The Government will continue to reinforce ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. In addition to the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively, thereby increasing the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants to three. Moreover, on 1 April 2025, the in-situ expansion in NKCI was completed, which provided 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%). The overall detention capacity has been increased to 940;
- (f) Combating illegal employment: To reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, ImmD and relevant law enforcement agencies have continued to take vigorous actions against illegal employment in a proactive manner, with the target of conducting no less than 13 200 operations on targeted establishments every year, in order to reduce the economic incentives for claimants;
- (g) Claims lodged by foreign domestic helpers (FDHs): As quite a number of non-refoulement claimants had been employed as FDHs prior to lodging their claims, the Security Bureau and ImmD have been collaborating and will continue to proactively collaborate with the relevant Consulates General in Hong Kong to step up publicity and education for newly arrived FDHs, impressing upon them that the non-refoulement claim mechanism should not be abused and that working illegally in Hong Kong is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment. With the Government's strengthened publicity efforts, only 22% of new claims received in 2024 were raised by former FDHs, down from 58% during the peak in 2022; and
- (h) Removal: The updated removal policy came into effect on 7 December 2022. ImmD could proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the CFI of the High Court, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. The Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants. In 2024, 2 219 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong, surpassing that year's target by 68% (i.e. removing not less than 1 320 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong).

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB037

(Question Serial No. 1349)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work on handling non-refoulement claimants, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the annual expenditures on screening claims, handling appeals/petitions, repatriating unsubstantiated claimants, providing publicly-funded legal assistance and humanitarian assistance respectively in the past 3 years, and what are the respective estimated expenditures in 2025-26?

2. What are the numbers of posts in the Immigration Department (ImmD) responsible for claims screening-related work, the numbers of the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) members and the numbers of posts in the TCAB Secretariat in each of the past 3 years?

3. What are the numbers of non-refoulement claims received, determined, withdrawn or that no further action could be taken, and pending screening by the ImmD in each of the past 3 years?

4. Please set out, by category of crimes, the numbers of non-refoulement claimants being arrested, prosecuted and convicted for criminal offences in each of the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon YANG Wing-kit (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

(1) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of Immigration Department's overall repatriation work, Immigration Department does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

(2) As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2022-23 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	75	35
2024-25	207	81	73 [^]	35
2025-26 (Estimate)	207	81	73 [^]	35

* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2025, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

(3) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

(4) According to Police’s record, since 2022 and up to end-2024, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2022	2023	2024
Shop theft	145	193	176
Miscellaneous thefts	99	71	96
Wounding and serious assault	51	75	76
Serious drug offences (Note 1)	85	99	63
Disorder/fighting in public places	44	42	48
Criminal damage	25	33	47
Burglary	27	18	27
Serious immigration offences (Note 2)	29	38	24
Others (Note 3)	182	176	229
Total	687	745	786

Note 1: “Serious drug offences” include possession of dangerous drugs exceeding a specified amount (i.e. possession of drugs, such as 5 grams of cocaine/heroin/marijuana, etc.), manufacturing dangerous drugs, trafficking of dangerous drugs, etc.

Note 2: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person.

Note 3: “Others” include forgery and coinage, robbery, possession of offensive weapon and pickpocketing etc.

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2022, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2022	454
2023	484
2024	363
2025 (January to February)	48

The law enforcement departments have not maintained prosecution and conviction figures concerning non-refoulement claimants.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB038

(Question Serial No. 2562)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the opening up of the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Frontier Closed Area mentioned under the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, will the Government advise on the following:

1. What plans does the Government have to promote the opening up of STK in 2025-26 and what is the relevant estimated expenditure?
2. Please tabulate the respective numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors visiting STK from February to March 2025, and among which the numbers of non-local visitors.
3. On account of the unused quota of Tourism Closed Area Permits for entry into STK, will the Government consider introducing visa-on-arrival arrangements for tour groups visiting on a "group in, group out" basis to facilitate arrangement for more visitors to enter STK by travel agencies?
4. The "contactless channels" at the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint in STK became operational on 23 December last year. What is the progress of the Government's study on allowing tour groups of travel agencies to enter Chung Ying Street on a "group in, group out" basis?

Asked by: Hon YIU Pak-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. Since 2022, the Security Bureau (SB) has, in collaboration with relevant bureaux and departments, formulated specific measures to progressively open up the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Frontier Closed Area (FCA) in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress, such as raising the daily visitor quota gradually, increasing the frequency of the public transport connecting STK to Sheung Shui and Fanling, and utilising the vehicle holding area inside the STK Boundary Control Point, which is due for redevelopment, as a short-term tenancy car park. The SB has launched the second phase opening-up of STK since 1 January 2024, and the coverage of which was extended to the entire STK FCA except Chung Ying Street with the aim of promoting cultural and eco-tourism of STK and nearby outlying islands. We will continue to enhance local attractions and provide tourism supporting facilities to create new development opportunities for the STK area. Besides, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) published the Action Plan on STK Cultural Tourism Zone in tandem

with the promulgation of the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry 2.0 in December 2024. The Government will continue to promote the tourism development in STK under the overall principle of “low density, high quality” and through enriching its historical and cultural elements. The SB will fully tie in with the implementation of the Action Plan through specific measures.

2. The numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors applying for Closed Area Permits (CAPs) for visiting STK from February to March 2025 are set out below:

Month	Number of individual visitors (number of non-local visitors)	Number of tour group visitors (number of non-local visitors)
February 2025	8,617 (436)	3,321 (17)
March 2025 (as at 5 March)	4,556 (75)	1,854 (6)
Total	13,173 (511)	5,175 (23)

3. Under the STK FCA opening-up plan, a daily visitor quota for individual and group visitors applying for CAP to enter STK (except Chung Ying Street) is set to ensure an orderly opening-up. The Hong Kong Police Force’s practice is to streamline the application procedures for STK CAPs as far as possible. Applicants are only required to provide the most basic information in their applications for vetting and approval by the Police. At present, the vast majority of the electronic Tourism CAP applications are approved within 3 working days. We will continue to review the statistics on the time needed for these applications and make adjustments to the relevant measures at an appropriate juncture.

4. With the gradual opening-up of STK FCA for tourism, the Government will continue to adopt an open stance in exploring promotion of tourism at Chung Ying Street, as well as other feasible measures that can further facilitate the trade and visitors to the STK FCA, with a view to fostering the development of cultural tourism in STK. The CSTB, the SB and Shenzhen Municipal Government have been communicating constantly for the development of cultural tourism in STK of Hong Kong and Shatoujiao of Shenzhen, and will explore feasible options for Hong Kong tour groups to enter Chung Ying Street for sightseeing via the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint on a “group in, group out” basis, with a view to further promoting the development of cultural tourism in STK. In December 2024, the SB launched the pilot scheme for “facial recognition technology” at the reprovisioned Chung Ying Street Checkpoint. Current holders of valid CAPs for access to Chung Ying Street may, upon prior enrolment, pass through the checkpoint via “contactless channels” without having to stop and produce their CAP. We will make use of the facial recognition system to complement the future development of Chung Ying Street for tourism.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB039

(Question Serial No. 1787)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the enforcement against animal cruelty, will the Government inform this Committee of the following for the past 3 years:

1. The annual total number of officers in the Animal Crime Police Teams across all police districts in the territory;
2. The number of animal cruelty cases received, handled and prosecuted each year, including the number of dog poisoning cases;
3. The training courses attended by members of the Animal Crime Police Teams, including the course content and any exchanges conducted with Mainland or overseas law enforcement agencies;
4. The frequency of liaison and collaboration with other government departments and organisations under the Animal Watch Scheme each year;
5. The expenditure and effectiveness of the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP), the "Animal Care Corner" and the "AWP Student Ambassadors," including any co-operation with other government departments such as the Education Bureau; and
6. How the Police will support the enforcement of the forthcoming amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance, including whether there are plans to establish a dedicated animal police team to conduct more proactive and professional investigations into animal cruelty cases.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. To combat acts of cruelty to animals, the Police Force has established Animal Crime Police Teams in 22 police districts. These teams are staffed by officers with experience in investigating and handling serious crimes. The establishment of Animal Crime Police Team varies in different police districts. In general, a team comprises 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant and 4 to 6 Police Constables. The Force will review the

manpower deployment from time to time and make appropriate deployment to meet operational needs.

2. The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Force and prosecutions instituted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases reported	54	74	71
Number of persons arrested	32	60	59
Number of prosecutions instituted	20	22	17 (as at third quarter)

The Force does not maintain other information requested in the question.

3. The Force has been exchanging experiences with its Mainland and overseas counterparts in various areas of policing, including the prevention of cruelty to animals. On education and training, the Force has invited officers from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to explain to the trainees of training programmes the laws related to cruelty to animals, skills in handling animals, experience in case investigation, and the inter-departmental co-operation mechanism. The Force also organises seminars from time to time and invites relevant officers from AFCD, SPCA and the Animal Crime Police Teams to share their experience so that the officers of the Animal Crime Police Teams can have a better grasp of the latest situation of and trend in cruelty to animals.
4. In collaboration with AFCD, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, SPCA, veterinarian associations and animal concern groups, the Force introduced the Animal Watch Scheme (the Scheme) in 2011 to combat cruelty to animals. Later on, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences of the City University of Hong Kong was also invited to join the Scheme. The Scheme aims at consolidating co-operation among various stakeholders through a multi-pronged approach of education, training, publicity, intelligence gathering and investigation, as well as enhancing the efficacy of the Force's efforts in the investigation of such cases. The Force does not maintain the other breakdown requested in the question.
5. To enlist public support and assistance for combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animals lovers at the community level and on online social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In addition to organising various community activities, AWP has been actively promoting the “Animal Care Corner” initiative in schools, encouraging them to keep pets. Students are appointed as “AWP Student Ambassadors” to take responsibility for caring for the animals in the “Animal Care Corner.” By collaborating with government departments and animal welfare organisations, such as the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Ocean Park, AWP provides diverse training to enhance students’ pet care skills. Furthermore, AWP has partnered with the Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong to launch the “AWP Student Mentorship Programme”, aimed at providing professional animal care guidance to students in schools with an “Animal Care Corner”.

The expenditure involved forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (1) “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

The Force will continue to raise awareness of preventing cruelty to animals through AWP and adopt a multifaceted approach in evaluating its effectiveness by a variety of indicators, including the numbers of cases reported and persons arrested as well as the level of overall public engagement. At present, most of the cases of cruelty to animals are reported to the Force by members of the public who voluntarily offer information for investigation. This shows that AWP has a significant impact on enhancing police-community co-operation and raising public awareness of combating cruelty to animals.

6. The Animal Crime Police Teams are responsible for the law enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169). A sharing platform is available among the Animal Crime Police Teams of different police districts for them to share their investigative experience. The Force also provides specialised trainings on handling of cases of animal cruelty to the investigating officers to ensure the officers can carry out comprehensive investigations into these cases. In addition, the Force, AFCD and SPCA have established a co-operation mechanism whereby AFCD and SPCA officers provide professional advice and assist in investigation at the scene of an animal cruelty case where necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB040

(Question Serial No. 1788)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (4) Operations
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Government indicated last year that 2 000 closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) would be installed at various locations across the territory and further indicated plans this year to increase the number to 6 000 to 7 000. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) The progress and effectiveness of the installation;
- (2) Whether policy objectives, such as the crime detection rate, have been devised for the installation of CCTVs; if so, the details; if not, the reasons;
- (3) Whether the CCTVs are equipped with facial recognition capabilities; and
- (4) Whether collaboration with other government departments is considered for a joint installation of CCTVs to enhance law enforcement efficiency; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

A consolidated reply to questions 1 to 4 is as follows:

To further enhance public safety and combat crime comprehensively, the Police Force has been, under the government-led "Territory-wide Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme" (the Scheme), installing CCTVs across the territory since April 2024. To date, installations have commenced at 615 locations within the 18 districts that record relatively higher crime rates and pedestrian flow. The first phase of the Scheme, involving the installation of 2 000 CCTV units, is targeted for completion within 2025.

As at the end of December 2024, the CCTV system had assisted the Force in detecting 122 criminal cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, resulting in 202 arrests. Among the 28 cases of murder, robbery and burglary detected with the assistance of CCTV system, 90% were detected within an average of 2 days. This

demonstrates that the CCTV system not only makes the investigations more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from aiding in crime detection, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. The Force conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes (down by 3.2% to 27.4%) after the installation of CCTVs, showing the Scheme's positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

Meanwhile, the Force is now actively studying and drawing reference from the CCTV standards and enforcement practices of law enforcement agencies around the world. By incorporating more advanced technologies into the Scheme (including the Crowd Size Analysis System, facial recognition technology and the Automatic Number Plate Recognition System), the Force aims to maximise its contribution to the public interest. The Force has also formulated a set of comprehensive and robust internal operational guidelines to ensure a rigorous monitoring standard for the supervision of the CCTV system. In-house training programmes will be provided to authorised officers to ensure proper and effective operation of the video management system.

In parallel, the Force is maintaining close liaison with relevant government departments and other stakeholders in studying the plan to import the Force's CCTV footage into its video management system by 2025. By fully leveraging the resources of government departments and private organisations, the Force aims to expand the coverage of the CCTV network in an orderly manner, thereby further enhancing the effectiveness of crime prevention and detection. Regarding the relevant arrangements, the Force will commission an independent consultancy to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment, and will seek advice from the Department of Justice and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data to ensure that the relevant operations comply with the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

Details of the subsequent phases of the Scheme are yet to be finalised.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB041

(Question Serial No. 1869)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the Police Force's one-stop scam and pitfall search engine "Scameter+", which helps the public identify frauds and online pitfalls, please provide the following information:

1. Its development cost, annual maintenance expenditure, total number of downloads, promotional expenditure in the past year, and the estimated promotional budget for the coming year;
2. The total number of public search queries recorded, the total number of Call Alert notifications issued, the total number of Website Detection notifications issued, and the total number of cases adopted after receiving public reports since the upgrade was launched last year; and
3. Whether there is a detailed plan for continued refinement of the application, including whether its mechanisms will be extended to other platforms and whether a function for actively blocking junk calls will be introduced. If so, the details and estimated expenditure; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. The expenditures on the development, maintenance and publicity campaigns for "Scameter" and "Scameter+" form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Police Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.
2. To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed "Scameter" in September 2022 and its mobile application "Scameter+" in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded "Scameter+" by introducing a public reporting platform and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious

websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, “Scameter” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public, whereas “Scameter+” had alerted users to over 90 000 suspicious calls and over 600 000 suspicious websites. Meanwhile, from September 2022 to the end of last year, the Force requested telecommunications service providers to intercept more than 8 300 local and non-local suspicious phone numbers, as well as nearly 30 000 suspicious website links.

3. “Scameter” has undergone continuous upgrades and expansion of its functions since its launch. Currently, “Scameter+” is equipped with blocking functions, as well as call alert and website detection functions that automatically identify scam calls and fraudulent websites. Upon detecting potential scams or cybersecurity risks, the application sends real-time notifications to remind users not to answer the calls or browse the websites. Additionally, “Scameter” includes a public intelligence platform, allowing members of the public to report scams and pitfalls, thereby further enriching its database.

In addition, the Force has been working closely with the banking industry to make effective use of the data available from “Scameter”. In November 2023, the first phase of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism was introduced, initially covering transactions conducted via the Faster Payment System. Subsequent expansions in the second and third phases, launched in August and December 2024 respectively, extended the mechanism to cover internet banking, physical branch transactions and automated teller machines (including cash deposit machines), providing the public with more comprehensive protection. Before a transaction is confirmed, the mechanism issues an alert to remind users of potential fraud risks. At present, the mechanism covers the vast majority of the public’s day-to-day transfers.

The Force will continuously review and enhance the functions of “Scameter”, with a view to strengthening anti-fraud measures in a proactive manner.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB042

(Question Serial No. 0663)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned that the Police Force will, among others, strengthen its response in tackling deceptions and frauds through the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub and Anti-Deception Coordination Centre. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of deceptions and frauds reported and the amount of losses over the past 3 years;
2. The number of deceptions and frauds successfully detected by the Police, the number of persons arrested, and the amount successfully recovered over the past 3 years; and
3. Regarding the Police's mobile app "Scameter+", which enables the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application, how frequently does the Force update the database to ensure the data remains accurate and readily accessible?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Kin-por (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

1-2. The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved, the number of arrests and the amount of fraudulent payments intercepted for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases	27 923	39 824	44 480
Detection rate	12.0%	11.9%	10.6%
Amount involved (HK\$)	4.85 billion	9.18 billion	9.15 billion
Number of arrests	4 112	7 043	8 692
Fraudulent payments intercepted (HK\$)	1.36 billion	1.29 billion	1.48 billion

3. To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed "Scameter" in September 2022 and its mobile application "Scameter+"

in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded “Scameter+” by introducing a public reporting platform to enrich its database and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, “Scameter” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public.

The Force updates the “Scameter” database daily to ensure that the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB043

(Question Serial No. 0560)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: Not specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The estimate of the amount required in 2025-26 for the salaries and expenses of the Hong Kong Police Force is \$28,056,461,000, representing an increase of \$1,322,008,000 over the revised estimate for 2024-25. As of 31 March 2025, the Hong Kong Police Force had an establishment of 37 992 posts, with an expected net decrease of 199 posts in 2025-26. In this connection, please provide the following details to this Committee:

1. Details of the posts to be created, including the total expenditure to be involved, as well as the posts to be deleted and the total expenditure thus saved;
2. Details of the current vacancies in the Force, including the total number of vacancies, post titles, ranks, duties and payroll costs. Please also outline the measures and strategies that the Force intends to implement to strengthen recruitment efforts in the future.
3. Detailed information on the number of recruitment exercises conducted through events such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, the Education and Careers Expo, advertisements and various promotional channels; the number of persons engaged; the number of applications received; the number of persons employed; and the respective financial expenditures for each of the past 3 years;
4. The Force has conducted the Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) at 11 local universities to facilitate students' entry into the Force and launched the PURE (Mainland) to recruit Hong Kong students studying in Mainland China. Please advise on the total number of students engaged, the number of applications received, and the number of students employed through these programmes since their inception, with a breakdown by local students and Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland. Please also indicate whether the effectiveness of these recruitment exercises has been reviewed; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s); and
5. Under Head 122, the number of staff under all programmes is projected to be 37 793 as of 31 March 2026. Of these, 28 335 police officers will be available for front-line operational duties, 2 405 for front-line professional support and 2 390 for

logistical/administrative support and training. Please advise whether information is available on the deployment of the remaining 4 663 officers; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 199 non-directorate posts (involving creation of 32 civilian posts, and reduction of 208 disciplined service posts and 23 civilian posts) in the Police Force.

Details on the salaries of the 32 civilian posts to be created are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Total (civilian staff)	32	MPS 1 – 10	15,180 – 26,590

Details on the 208 disciplined service posts and 23 civilian posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Senior Superintendent	-1	PPS 54 – 54b	154,775 – 163,905
Superintendent	-2	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	-3	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/Inspector	-7	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Station Sergeant	-3	PPS 24 – 33a	52,015 – 76,830
Sergeant	-11	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	-181	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	-208		
Total (civilian staff)	-23	MPS 1 – 11 MOD 0 – 13	15,180 – 28,225 15,175 – 19,755
Total	-231		

2. At present, there are approximately 6 000 vacancies for police officers in the Force. Details on the rank categories mainly involved are as follows:

Rank category	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Inspectorate	PPS 24 – 49	52,015 – 127,620
Junior officer	PPS 4 – 33a	28,940 – 76,830

The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become police officers, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised and participated in regular recruitment activities and projects in Hong Kong, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Community Outreach Recruitment Express, Sportsmen's Programme for Recruitment, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, as well as has set up booths at the Education and Careers Expo. In September 2024, the Force launched the "HKPF Recruit" mobile application to leverage technology and enhance recruitment efficiency. Through the app, members of the public can submit applications for police positions, track their selection progress, including interview scheduling and results, and register for recruitment-related activities.

Targeting local students, the Force has introduced initiatives such as the Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) and Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, while also co-organising full-time "Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training" programmes with 3 post-secondary institutions. Additionally, in February 2025, the Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local vocational training institution to identify individuals interested in joining the disciplined services at an early stage. Recognising the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing higher education in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the PURE (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment efforts have included visits to cities such as Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to encourage Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force.

The Force has also been actively conducting publicity and recruitment campaigns in overseas cities, including London, Toronto, and Sydney. To provide a one-stop comprehensive selection process for Hong Kong students studying overseas and returning to Hong Kong during holidays, the Force launched the PURE (Overseas) in December 2024.

The Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised and participated in regular recruitment activities and projects in Hong Kong. The Force has also introduced diverse recruitment activities and projects targeting local, Mainland and overseas students to facilitate students' applications to the Force upon graduation. In addition, the Force is also committed to strengthening training collaboration with local educational institutions. Since the 2024/25 academic year, the Force has co-organised full-time "Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training" programmes with 3 post-secondary institutions. Students who successfully complete the programme and pass the police constable selection process can immediately proceed to the Hong Kong Police College for foundation training. In February 2025, the Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local vocational training institution to identify and nurture individuals interested in joining the disciplined services at an early stage.

The Force will continue to adjust the approach of recruitment publicity in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market.

3. The Force has regularly organised a variety of recruitment activities and programmes, including the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Community Outreach Recruitment Express, Police Mentorship Programme, PURE, “Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training” programmes, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Sportsmen’s Recruitment Programme and participation in the Education and Careers Expo. In addition, the Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media channels and social networking platforms, such as banners, posters, recruitment videos, television, the Police Force’s website, the “Hong Kong Police Force” mobile application and the Force’s social media platforms. Publicity videos have also been shared on major social networking platforms and websites. The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the expenditure involved.

With the implementation of various proactive recruitment strategies and activities, the number of applicants to the Force and recruits over the past 3 years is as follows:

Financial year	Number of applicants		Number of recruits	
	Probationary Inspector	Police Constable	Probationary Inspector	Police Constable
2022-23	3 391	4 606	165	554
2023-24	5 051	6 647	157	818
2024-25 (As at 28 February 2025)	5 129	6 491	148	817

4. To facilitate university students’ entry into the Force, the Force has been conducting publicity work on university campuses. The Force has organised the PURE at 12 local universities since 2022, offering recruitment information and conducting selection process. As at 28 February 2025, around 2 000 applications for the position of Probationary Inspector, Police Constable and Auxiliary Police Constable have been received through the PURE. Among them, around 40% of the applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, and around 10% of the applicants have joined the Force as probationary inspectors, police constables or auxiliary police constables.

Given the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing higher education in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the PURE (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment efforts have included visits to Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to attract Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force. The initiative received over 4 000 applications, with around 2 000 applicants submitting their applications and participating in the selection process (including for Probationary Inspector, Police Constable, and Auxiliary Police Constable) on-site. As at 28 February 2025, over 50% of these applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, while over 10% have successfully joined the Force as probationary inspectors, police constables or auxiliary police constables. The Force has been proactively communicating with applicants to expedite the recruitment process.

5. The remaining 4 663 officers are civilian staff who support the frontline operational duties of police officers, as well as provide professional frontline support, logistical/administrative support and training.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB044

(Question Serial No. 0561)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (661) Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)
Programme: (4) Operations
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Provision of \$1,063,365,000 under Subhead 661 minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote) represents an increase of \$846,079,000 (389.4%) over the revised estimate for 2024-25. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for capital account items including the Government's territory-wide closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) installation at crime black spots. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the estimate for the territory-wide installation of CCTVs at crime black spots for 2025-26. It was indicated earlier that 612 sets of CCTVs were installed in 2024, with plans to install more than 1 300 sets next year. By 2027, a cumulative total of 6 000 to 7 000 sets of CCTVs is expected to be installed. Please provide detailed information on the number of CCTVs to be installed each year and the corresponding estimated expenditures for 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027. If such measures are in place, please provide details; if not, please explain the reasons.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

The first phase of the "Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme" (the Scheme) involves the installation of 2 000 CCTV units across various districts in Hong Kong. To date, installations have commenced at 615 locations within the 18 districts that record relatively higher crime rates and pedestrian flow. The first phase of the Scheme, involving the installation of 2 000 CCTV units, is targeted for completion within 2025.

As the development of the system in the first phase, which involves the installation of 2 000 CCTV units across the territory, has been supported by the Force's existing resources, no specific breakdown of the expenditure is maintained. Details of the subsequent phases of the Scheme are yet to be finalised.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB045

(Question Serial No. 0562)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The provision for 2025-26 is \$110.4 million (1.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024-25. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for filling of vacancies, full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2024-25, salary increments and increased cash flow requirement for capital account items. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The details of the vacancies under Programme 2, including the respective post titles, ranks, duties, payroll costs, and whether they are permanent or supernumerary, as well as the nature of the work involved;
2. In 2024, a total of 94 747 crimes were reported and the crime detection rate was 30.4%. Please explain the specific reasons for this relatively low crime detection rate and how the Force plans to improve it; and
3. As mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, the Force plans to strengthen its crime investigation capability by improving the existing criminal intelligence systems. Please specify which systems will be improved and provide details of the estimated expenditure and staff establishment required for the enhancements, as well as the expected completion timeline for the system upgrades.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

1. At present, there are approximately 6 000 vacancies for police officers under Programmes (1)-(4) in the Police Force. Details on the rank categories mainly involved are as follows:

Rank	Police Pay Scale (PPS)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2024)
Inspectorate	PPS 24 – 49	52,015 – 127,620
Junior officer	PPS 4 – 33a	28,940 – 76,830

The Force reviews the manpower and resources allocated to various formations from time to time and makes flexible deployment to meet the policing needs and the service needs of the community. The Force will continue to enhance effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes, so that various new policies and initiatives can be taken forward.

2. In 2024, a total of 94 747 crimes were recorded in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 4 471 cases or 5% compared with 2023. The overall detection rate was 30.4%, representing a slight decrease of 0.7 percentage point compared with that of 2023. Leaving deception cases aside, the overall crime figure recorded a drop of 185 cases (-0.4%) last year, while the detection rate rose by 1.7 percentage points to 47.9%, indicating that the rise in deception cases was the main reason for the increase in the overall crime figure and the decline in the overall detection rate.

A number of traditional crimes such as homicide, robbery, burglary, wounding and serious assault, serious drug offences, theft, criminal damage, criminal intimidation and arson recorded declines in 2024. Quite a number of these crimes even reached new lows not seen in years or on record, while their detection rates were considerably high as well, with some even reaching the highest levels on record. For instance, the detection rate for robbery and snatching reached the highest level on record, while the detection rates for burglary, arson, theft from vehicles and criminal damage were the second-highest since records began.

In 2024, 44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing an increase of 4 656 cases or 11.7% compared with 2023. The detection rate stood at 10.6%. The low detection rate was primarily attributed to the fact that over 80% of the cases involved online and telephone scams. Fraudsters were able to bypass geographical boundaries to contact victims and swiftly transfer a portion of the proceeds overseas, making it challenging for the Force to trace and recover the funds. Additionally, fraud syndicates often operated remotely from regions with weak rule of law, further complicating enforcement efforts. Some stooge accounts used to collect fraudulent payments in Hong Kong were also opened by non-locals, who left the city after setting up the accounts to evade arrest by the Force.

To address this issue, the Force, together with Mainland public security authorities and overseas law enforcement agencies, has carried out a series of enforcement actions. Between May and July 2024, the Force conducted joint operations with Mainland public security authorities. These efforts resulted in the arrest of 261 persons across both jurisdictions, associated with 535 deception cases in Hong Kong and involving over HK\$330 million in laundered fraudulent funds. In September last year, the Force also dismantled a cross-border money laundering syndicate operating in Hong Kong and the Mainland through timely intelligence exchanges facilitated by the Anti-Deception Alliance and the banking sector, leading to the arrest of 14 persons. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchanges with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat deception and related money laundering crimes.

3. To effectively prevent and detect crime, the Force periodically pursues the upgrading and enhancement of its relevant criminal intelligence computer systems. In 2021, funding was approved for the Force to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform.

This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Evaluation Sharing Tool for banks to share information on corporate accounts involved in fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rates of identifying and combatting criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, which automates fund flow analysis to a high degree, enabling investigators to conduct fund flow and network analysis with greater efficiency. Additionally, funding was approved in 2024 for the Force to develop the Centralised Digital Image Platform for the proper storage, processing, retrieval and sharing of multimedia files with intelligence or evidential value. The Force will continue to employ advanced technologies to enhance its capabilities in collecting and analysing criminal intelligence, and in combatting organised and serious crime, technology crime and deception.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB046

(Question Serial No. 0563)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Police attach great importance on animal welfare and have assigned a designated Animal Crime Police Team in each of the 22 police districts with crime investigation units to handle animal cruelty cases across the territory. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. the total number of reported cases of cruelty to animals received by the Force, the types of animals involved, and the respective numbers of prosecutions and convictions in such cases for each of the past 3 years;
2. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure in respect of the Animal Crime Police Teams for each of the past 3 years, whether the current staff establishment is adequate for coping with their daily work, and whether there are any plans to strengthen the staff establishment;
3. regarding the continued implementation of the Animal Watchers Programme, as mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, the number and types of activities organised since the launch of the Programme, the number of participants and the expenditure involved, as well as whether the effectiveness of these activities has been evaluated; and
4. the number of police dogs trained and the expenditure involved for each of the past 3 years, as well as the expenditure earmarked this year for training police dogs.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

1. The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Police Force, persons arrested, prosecutions instituted and persons convicted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases reported	54	74	71
Number of persons arrested	32	60	59
Number of prosecutions instituted	20	22	17 (as at third quarter)
Number of persons convicted	23	20	14 (as at third quarter)

The Force does not maintain other information requested in the question.

- To more accurately represent the role of the specialised criminal investigation teams assigned to animal cruelty cases in various police districts, these groups have been officially named “Animal Crime Police Teams” effective from 28 February 2021. The establishment of an Animal Crime Police Team varies across different police districts. Generally, a team is comprised of 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant, and 4 to 6 Police Constables. The Force will review the manpower deployment from time to time and make appropriate deployment to meet operational needs.

The expenditure involved forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. No specific breakdown is available.

- To enlist public support and assistance in combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animal lovers at the community level and on social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In 2021, the Force organised several large-scale activities related to crime prevention, including an event titled “AWP Fight Poisoning Campaign”, a video competition named “AWP Plank Challenge”, and a public education event called “AWP Community Mobile Classroom”. In 2022, the Force launched a series of educational and promotional activities under the banner of “AWP x 25A”. These activities included the “AWP Colours in 25A” colouring and drawing contest, school promotions titled “Animal Care Corner”, and the “BYOP (Bring Your Own Pet) Treasure Hunt”. In 2023, AWP initiated the “Synergy for Great” initiative, collaborating with various organisations to introduce the “Life-wide Animal Care College” educational programmes. This initiative featured the “Adventure King Summer Camp”, educational seminars, visits to the veterinary medical centre, and the “Hang-in-there Charity Challenge” in observance of World Animal Day. In 2024, AWP organised a variety of activities, including the “Education Programme of Ocean Park Academy Hong Kong”, “Community Mobile Classroom 2.0”, “Animal Care Summer Camp” and the “Bring Your Own Pets x Sunny & Zander Charity Run.” Furthermore, AWP has

partnered with the Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong to launch the “AWP Student Mentorship Programme”, aimed at providing professional animal care guidance to students in schools with an “Animal Care Corner”.

The events organised from 2021 to 2024 saw the physical participation of over 198 000 people, with approximately 22 million online engagements (e.g. social media posts) recorded. The Force will continue its efforts to raise public awareness about preventing cruelty to animals through the AWP initiative. A multifaceted approach will be used to evaluate its effectiveness, using a variety of indicators such as the number of cases reported, the number of persons arrested and the level of public engagement. Currently, most animal cruelty cases are reported to the Force by members of the public who voluntarily provide information for investigations. This demonstrates that the AWP initiative has a significant impact on enhancing police-community co-operation and raising public awareness in the fight against animal cruelty.

The expenditure involved forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (1) “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

4. The average number of serving police dogs of the year for the past 3 years is as follows:

Year	Number of serving police dogs (average number of the year)
2022	154
2023	152
2024	152
2025 (as at February)	153

The expenditure of the Police Dog Unit (PDU) includes expenses on the daily operation of PDU bases, dog food, medication and dog training equipment, as well as salaries for dog handlers, supervising officers and civilian staff, and costs for equipment. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure on training police dogs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB047

(Question Serial No. 0137)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Cross-Border Deception

Regarding the captioned matter, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of deception cases, the number of victims involved and the total amount of financial losses reported last year;
2. details on how the Government plans to enhance publicity on social media and public awareness of deception prevention; and
3. the current status of joint efforts with the Mainland and overseas counterparts in combating deception each year, including the effectiveness of these efforts, the number of cases detected and the amount of defrauded money recovered?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. In 2024, a total of 44 480 cases of deception and fraud were reported, involving losses amounting to \$9.15 billion. The Police Force does not maintain overall data on the total number of victims.
2. Over the past year, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through channels like ferries, minibuses, trams, a major logistics company's fleet and the Anti-scam Promotional Truck, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. To further promote the use of the self-developed "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. In December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of

considerable size featuring “The Little Grape” in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the “Anti-Money Laundering Month” again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled “Your Life. Your Choice” together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts.

The Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, and social media like the Force’s official accounts on Facebook and Xiaohongshu, the websites of the “CyberDefender” and the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre, as well as the mobile application “Scameter+” to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

3. The Force has been maintaining close intelligence exchanges with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception activities. Over the past 5 years (2020 to 2024), multiple joint operations conducted with these agencies have resulted in the arrest of over 730 persons. These operations were linked to at least 3 177 deception and technology crime cases, involving criminal proceeds exceeding \$7.2 billion.

In collaboration with the banking sector, the Force’s Anti-Deception Coordination Centre successfully intercepted \$9.55 billion in fraudulent funds across 4 919 fraud cases over the past 5 years. The Force does not maintain statistics on the amounts recovered by the victims.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1537)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the upgrading of the existing criminal intelligence computer systems (the systems) to enhance the Force's intelligence analysis and serious crime investigation capability, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. The lifespan of the existing systems and the amount of recurrent expenditure incurred (including but not limited to hardware and software maintenance, communication networks and system maintenance);
2. Any preliminary plans proposed (e.g. how the updated system will address existing technical limitations); and
3. Given the critical role of the systems in crime investigation and prevention, whether the Police Force will expedite the relevant upgrading work and whether the expenditure involved has been assessed.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

1-3. To effectively prevent and detect crime, the Police Force periodically pursues the upgrading and enhancement of its relevant criminal intelligence computer systems.

Expenditures related to the Force's Operational Nominal Index Computer System and Criminal Intelligence Computer System form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

In 2021, funding was approved for the Force to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform. This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Sharing Tool for banks to share information

on corporate accounts involved in fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rates of identifying and combating criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, which automates fund flow analysis to a high degree, enabling investigators to conduct fund flow and network analysis with greater efficiency.

Additionally, funding was approved in 2024 for the Force to develop the Centralised Digital Image Platform for the proper storage, processing, retrieval and sharing of multimedia files with intelligence or evidential value.

The Force will continue to employ advanced technologies to enhance its capabilities in collecting and analysing criminal intelligence, and in combating organised and serious crime, technology crime and deception.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB049

(Question Serial No. 1019)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (001) Salaries

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Hong Kong Police Force expects a net decrease of 199 posts in 2025-26. In this connection, please provide this Committee with the following information:

- 1) Details of the reduction in establishment, including (a) the formations affected, (b) the ranks involved, and (c) the amount of expenditure on emoluments related to the reduction;
- 2) The method by which the reduction in establishment will be implemented;
- 3) How the Force will ensure sufficient police manpower to uphold law and order and safeguard public safety following the reduction in establishment; and
- 4) Whether additional auxiliary police officer posts will be created; if so, the reasons and the estimated expenditures involved; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1&2. In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 199 non-directorate posts (involving creation of 32 civilian posts, and reduction of 208 disciplined service posts and 23 civilian posts) in the Police Force. Of these, 153 posts fall under Programme (1) "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community". Details on the number of posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Senior Superintendent	-1	PPS 54 – 54b	154,775 – 163,905
Superintendent	-2	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	-3	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/ Inspector	-7	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Station Sergeant	-3	PPS 24 – 33a	52,015 – 76,830
Sergeant	-11	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	-181	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	-208		
Total (civilian staff)	-23	MPS 1 – 11 MOD 0 – 13	15,180 – 28,225 15,175 – 19,755
Total	-231		

The Force will review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the establishment in light of policing needs from time to time.

3. Through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes and efficiency enhancement, the Force regularly examines its staff establishment and makes flexible deployment in response to policing needs to meet the community's service demands. At the same time, the Force has formulated comprehensive human resources and strategic plans for staff training, career development, among others. Officers are encouraged to make self-advancement and strengthen their own professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. In general, policing services will not be affected by the reduction in establishment.
4. As at 28 February 2025, the establishment and strength of the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force were 4 501 and 3 323 respectively. The Force will continue to adopt its current recruitment strategies to attract high-calibre candidates with the passion to serve the community to join the Auxiliary Police Force and fill the existing vacancies.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB050

(Question Serial No. 1027)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

It is mentioned that the Force aims to enhance road safety by reducing traffic accidents and maintaining a smooth and safe traffic flow in Hong Kong. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of fixed penalty tickets issued by the Police for the past 3 years, with a breakdown by Police District;
2. A) The number of traffic wardens, as well as B) the number of newly recruited traffic wardens and those lost due to natural wastage, in each Police District for the past 3 years; and
3. Whether the Police plan to recruit additional traffic wardens in the upcoming financial year; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. The number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking issued by the Police Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) for the past 3 years by Police Region is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of FPTs for illegal parking		
	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	624 000	523 167	397 077
Kowloon East	555 417	443 038	297 579
Kowloon West	1 011 084	960 276	872 319
New Territories South	570 895	471 527	390 462
New Territories North	602 075	615 011	585 760

Police Region	Number of FPTs for illegal parking		
	2022	2023	2024
Total	3 363 471	3 013 019	2 543 197

2. The number of traffic wardens in the Force in each Police District for the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Police District	Number of Senior Traffic Warden			Number of Traffic Warden		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Year (as at 31 December each year)						
Wan Chai District	5	5	5	25	26	24
Eastern District	2	2	2	15	13	14
Western District	2	2	2	11	11	11
Central District	2	2	2	12	9	13
Wong Tai Sin District	2	2	2	11	13	13
Kwun Tong District	2	2	2	9	7	10
Sau Mau Ping District	1	1	1	7	7	7
Tseung Kwan O District	2	2	2	10	11	10
Yau Tsim District	4	4	4	26	21	26
Mong Kok District	4	3	4	25	25	26
Kowloon City District	4	4	4	22	22	20
Sham Shui Po District	2	2	2	16	16	17
Tuen Mun District	2	2	2	8	6	6
Yuen Long District	2	2	2	14	14	13
Tai Po District	2	2	2	11	11	8
Tsuen Wan District	2	2	2	14	11	11
Kwai Tsing District	2	2	2	16	14	16
Airport District	1	1	1	7	7	9
Shatin District	1	1	1	10	9	10
Lantau District	1	1	1	7	7	6
Border District	0	0	0	3	2	3

The number of newly recruited traffic wardens and those lost due to natural wastage for the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of new recruits	Number of members lost due to natural wastage
2022	59	23
2023	7	35
2024	51	39

3. The Force has been closely monitoring the manpower situation of traffic wardens and conducts recruitment exercises when necessary. In the latest recruitment exercise concluded in 2024, a total of 51 new traffic wardens were recruited. Should there be vacancies to be filled in the future, another round of recruitment will be arranged.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB051

(Question Serial No. 1381)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Since February 2025, the Government has listed etomidate and its 3 analogues (metomidate, propoxate and isopropoxate) as dangerous drugs and renamed “space oil” as “space oil drug” to make clear to the public its nature as a dangerous drug and its associated harm to the public. In this connection, will this Committee be informed of the following:

- 1) The number of cases identified / reported so far involving the consumption, unlawful sale and possession, trafficking and unlawful manufacture of “space oil drug”, broken down by age group and case nature;
- 2) In relation to “space oil drug”-related offences in 2025-26, the i) staff establishment, ii) estimated expenditure, iii) nature and details of operations and iv) anticipated crime figures;
- 3) For public awareness and education efforts on the harm caused by “space oil drug” in 2025-26, the i) staff establishment, ii) estimated expenditure, iii) nature and details of activities and iv) anticipated number of people to be reached; and
- 4) In light of concerns that the consumption of “space oil drug” may move underground and become more clandestine following its regulation, any specific preventive and enforcement measures to address the issue, as well as plans for additional manpower and estimated expenditure; if so, the details?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

- 1) Following the gazettal of etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, and its 3 analogues as dangerous drugs on 14 February 2025, the number of persons arrested by the Police Force for related offences, broken down by age and offence type, is as follows:

Offence involving “space oil drug”	Between 14 and 28 February 2025	
	Number of arrested persons aged under 21	Number of arrested persons aged 21 or above
Trafficking	4	17
Consumption and possession	6	8
Manufacture	0	4

- 2 to 4) Since 14 February 2025, “space oil drug” has been listed as a dangerous drug upon gazettal. As at 28 February 2025, the Force has detected a total of 29 cases involving “space oil drug”, resulting in the arrest of 39 persons, including 10 youths aged under 21. On 17 February 2025, the Force detected the first case of manufacture of “space oil drug” after the legislative amendment, resulting in the arrest of 1 male and the seizure of about 400 suspected “space oil drug” capsules, 1.6 litres of suspected liquid etomidate and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia. In another case on 20 February 2025, the Force arrested 3 persons and seized about 12 suspected “space oil drug” capsules, 563.5 millilitres of suspected liquid etomidate and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia.

To tackle the issue of “space oil drug”, the Force introduced Etomidate Rapid Test Kits on 18 January 2025, enabling on-duty frontline officers to conduct on-site rapid tests for suspected possession of “space oil drug”.

In addition to enforcement actions, the Force remains committed to the anti-drug education work. Apart from incorporating the information about “space oil drug” into school talks and the “interactive anti-drugs drama”, the Force has also disseminated infographics and short videos on “space oil drug” to all schools in Hong Kong for showing to their students. Founded by the Force in 2021, the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” (L.I.O.N.) trains 100 undergraduates and secondary students annually to become anti-drug leaders. Now in its fourth cohort, L.I.O.N. continues to uphold its mission of fostering a drug-free culture.

The expenditure on combating drug crimes forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB052

(Question Serial No. 1382)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In April 2024, the Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme was launched to combat crime through the installation of CCTVs at crime black spots across Hong Kong. Furthermore, the provision for this Programme in 2025-26 has increased by \$1.075 billion (18.1%) compared to the revised estimate for 2024-25. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) The amount allocated for the Territory-wide CCTV Installation Scheme, its proportion of the \$1.075 billion increase in the 2025-26 financial provision, along with details of the staff establishment and expenditures involved;
- 2) The number and distribution of CCTVs installed and planned to be installed at crime black spots across Hong Kong from 2024 to 2027, broken down by District Council district, along with the annual target number of CCTVs to be installed;
- 3) The number and types of crime cases detected with the assistance of CCTVs since the Scheme's launch, broken down by District Council district; and
- 4) Whether the Police have assessed if the number of CCTVs installed under the Scheme is sufficient, and whether there are plans to expand the Scheme further; if so, the relevant details and the proposed number of additional CCTVs to be installed?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

A consolidated reply to questions 1 to 4 is as follows:

The first phase of the "Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme" (the Scheme) involves the installation of 2 000 CCTV units across various districts in Hong Kong. To date, installations have commenced at 615 locations within the 18 districts that record relatively higher crime rates and pedestrian flow. The first phase of the Scheme, involving the installation of 2 000 CCTV units, is targeted for completion within 2025.

As at the end of December 2024, the CCTV system had assisted the Force in detecting 122 criminal cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, resulting in 202 arrests. Among the 28 cases of murder, robbery and burglary detected with the assistance of CCTV system, 90% were detected within an average of 2 days. This demonstrates that the CCTV system not only makes investigation more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from aiding in crime detection, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. The Force conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes (down by 3.2% to 27.4%) after the installation of CCTVs, showing the Scheme's significant positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

As part of its anti-crime efforts, the Force will continue to review locations across the 18 districts that record relatively higher crime rates and pedestrian flow, and install CCTVs at strategic locations in various districts. This initiative seeks to enhance the Force's capabilities in preventing and detecting crime through CCTV installation, with a view to improving community-wide public safety.

As the development of the system in the first phase, which involves the installation of 2 000 CCTV units across the territory, has been supported by the Force's existing resources, no specific breakdown of the expenditure is maintained. Details of the subsequent phases of the Scheme are yet to be finalised.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB053

(Question Serial No. 3092)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

There has been a noticeable escalation in deception crimes in recent years. However, the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under this Programme do not include specific measures to strengthen efforts against various types of deception cases. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) Details of various types of deception over the past 3 years, including i) the number of cases, ii) the amount of money involved, iii) the number of prosecutions, iv) the number of convictions and the detection rate, as well as v) the amount of money recovered;
- 2) The number of offenders and victims of various types of deception over the past 3 years, with a breakdown by 10-year age groups;
- 3) For the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre over the past 3 years, an annual breakdown of the staff establishment, staff grades, expenditures involved and the total amount of fraudulent funds intercepted; and
- 4) Information on the measures introduced to address and prevent the increasing trend of crimes with the use of technologies such as Deepfake and other generative artificial intelligence in recent years, along with details of the staff establishment and expenditures allocated for these efforts.

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

- 1 to 3) The total number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved, the number of arrests and the amount of fraudulent funds intercepted for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases	27 923	39 824	44 480
Detection rate	12.0%	11.9%	10.6%
Amount involved (HK\$)	4.85 billion	9.18 billion	9.15 billion
Number of arrests	4 112	7 043	8 692
Fraudulent funds intercepted (HK\$)	1.36 billion	1.29 billion	1.48 billion

The number of persons arrested for deception, broken down by age group, in each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Aged 10 to 20	340	589	525
Aged 21 to 30	1 209	2 008	2 207
Aged 31 to 60	2 331	3 943	5 321
Aged 61 or above	232	503	639
Total	4 112	7 043	8 692

The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Force as well as the amount of losses for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Overall Deception Cases	27 923	39 824	44 480	4,850	9,180	9,150
Online Deception	19 599	27 314	27 485	3,073.8	5,345.9	4,924.1
<i>E-shopping Fraud</i>	8 735	8 950	11 559	74.1	190.5	356.3
<i>Online Investment Fraud</i>	1 884	5 105	3 930	926.5	3,267.4	2,261.7
<i>Online Employment Fraud</i>	2 884	3 518	3 853	459.1	760.2	797.2
<i>Social Media Deception</i>	3 605	3 372	3 039	779.0	745.4	662.5
<i>Phishing Scam (Note 1)</i>		4 322	2 731		102.4	53.5
<i>Email Scam</i>	391	208	197	751.1	163.6	104.1
Telephone Deception	2 831	3 213	9 204	1,076.5	1,102.8	2,911.0
<i>Impersonating Customer Service (Note 2)</i>			5 575			1,040.3
<i>Guess Who</i>	1 540	2 237	1 153	114.1	188.7	79.2
<i>Pretend Officials</i>	1 290	969	1 166	962.3	913.8	1,686.2
<i>Detained Son</i>	1	7	3	0.07	0.3	0.6

Note 1: Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

Note 2: Figures related to telephone deception involving “impersonating customer service” have been maintained by the Force since 2024.

The Force does not maintain statistics on the numbers of prosecutions, convictions and victims. Additionally, no breakdowns are maintained on the detection rate, the number of arrests and the amount of fraudulent funds intercepted for individual types of deception and fraud.

- 3) The staff establishment of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) for the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Superintendent	0	0	1
Chief Inspector	1	3	3
Senior Inspector/Inspector	5	10	10
Station Sergeant	1	2	2
Sergeant	10	14	17
Police Constable	32	51	51
Total (police officers)	49	80	84

The relevant expenditures of the ADCC form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

- 4) In 2024, the Force received 3 deception cases involving deepfake technology, one of which was detected through intelligence-led operations. In January 2025, the Force also dismantled another criminal syndicate that used deepfake technology to perpetrate scams. These two operations led to the arrest of 58 persons, including the mastermind and core members, with a total amount of nearly HK\$400 million involved. The criminal syndicate used deepfake technology to engage in online dating to lure victims in various parts of Asia to invest in fraudulent cryptocurrency platforms.

In response to various challenges posed to cyber policing by artificial intelligence (AI) such as deepfake technology, the Force has been exchanging intelligence with International Criminal Police Organization, law enforcement agencies of different jurisdictions and the AI industry. The Force has also been keeping track of the latest modus operandi and criminal trends worldwide, which include the application of deepfake technology.

To combat different technology crimes, the Force set up the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) in December 2022. Led by the Director of Crime and Security and comprising 12 experts and leaders from the technology sector, the CPAP seeks to look into risks of crime and fraud involving AI (including deepfake technology) and to enhance public awareness on the potential risks of AI. The Force will continue to step up co-operation with stakeholders of relevant sectors, and will jointly explore and formulate effective measures to combat relevant crimes.

On enhancing professional competence, the Force has been organising internal training from time to time to enrich officers’ knowledge of deepfake technology and the related cybercrimes. Relevant equipment will also be timely upgraded to strengthen the Force’s capability in combating different types of cybercrimes.

In terms of publicity and education, the Force has been working on various fronts, including holding press conferences from time to time to educate the public about common tactics used by fraudsters and demonstrate how deepfake technology can be used to conduct video conferences. Through its Facebook page and the CyberDefender website, the Force has been disseminating information about the latest crime situation and anti-deception advice related to deepfake technology.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB054

(Question Serial No. 2522)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned that the Police will raise public awareness in the fight against cruelty to animals through the Animal Watchers Programme. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) The specific activities (e.g. talks and exhibitions), organised by the Government in the past 3 years, along with the expenditure for each activity;
- (2) The total number of animal cruelty cases recorded in each of the past 5 years; and whether consideration will be given to strengthening legislative measures and allocating additional funds to prevent animal cruelty in 2025-26; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

- (1) To enlist public support and assistance in combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Police Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animal lovers at the community level and on social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In 2022, the Force launched a series of educational and promotional activities under the banner of "AWP x 25A". These activities included the "AWP Colours in 25A" colouring and drawing contest, school promotions titled "Animal Care Corner", and the "BYOP (Bring Your Own Pet) Treasure Hunt". In 2023, AWP initiated the "Synergy for Great" initiative, collaborating with various organisations to introduce the "Life-wide Animal Care College" educational programmes. This initiative featured the

“Adventure King Summer Camp”, educational seminars, visits to the veterinary medical centre, and the “Hang-in-there Charity Challenge” in observance of World Animal Day. In 2024, AWP organised a variety of activities, including the “Education Programme of Ocean Park Academy Hong Kong”, “Community Mobile Classroom 2.0”, “Animal Care Summer Camp” and the “Bring Your Own Pets x Sunny & Zander Charity Run.” Furthermore, AWP has partnered with the Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong to launch the “AWP Student Mentorship Programme”, aimed at providing professional animal care guidance to students in schools with an “Animal Care Corner”.

The expenditures involved form part of the total expenditure under Programme (1) “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

- (2) The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Force for the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of cases reported
2020	70
2021	88
2022	54
2023	74
2024	71

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap.169) falls under the policy purview of the Environment and Ecology Bureau. The Force will actively support relevant studies and, where necessary, provide recommendations from a law enforcement perspective.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB055

(Question Serial No. 2418)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Police Force indicated that there would be a net decrease of 153 posts in its establishment for 2025-26. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The details of the posts to be created by the Police Force, including the total expenditure to be involved, as well as the details of the posts to be deleted and the total expenditure thus saved;
2. Any specific plans to be implemented for recruiting police officers, along with the details of these plans;
3. The number of auxiliary police officers who have been appointed as regular police officers over the past 1 year; and
4. (i) The figures and rates of wastage for police officers at various ranks over the past 1 year, (ii) a breakdown of these figures by reasons, and (iii) the average length of service of the officers.

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

1. In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 153 non-directorate posts (involving creation of 14 civilian posts and reduction of 160 disciplined services posts and 7 civilian posts) on the staff establishment under Programme (1) "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community".

Details on the 14 civilian posts to be created and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly Salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Total (civilian staff)	14	MPS 1 – 10	15,180 – 26,590

Details on the 160 disciplined services posts and 7 civilian posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly Salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Superintendent	-1	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	-1	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/Inspector	-2	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Sergeant	-1	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	-155	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	-160		
Total (civilian staff)	-7	MPS 1 – 10 MOD 0 – 8	15,180 – 26,590 15,175 – 17,880
Total	-167		

The Force will review the manpower and resources of all formations from time to time and adjust the establishment based on policing needs.

2. The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become police officers, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised and participated in regular recruitment activities and projects in Hong Kong, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Community Outreach Recruitment Express, Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, as well as has set up booths at the Education and Careers Expo. In September 2024, the Force launched the “HKPF Recruit” mobile application to leverage technology and enhance recruitment efficiency. Through the app, members of the public can submit applications for police positions, track their selection progress, including interview scheduling and results, and register for recruitment-related activities.

Targeting local students, the Force has introduced initiatives such as the Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) and Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, while also co-organising full-time “Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training” programmes with 3 post-secondary institutions.

Additionally, in February 2025, the Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local vocational training institution to identify individuals interested in joining the disciplined services at an early stage. Recognising the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing higher education in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the PURE (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment efforts have included visits to cities such as Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to encourage Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force. The Force has also been actively conducting publicity and recruitment campaigns in overseas cities, including London, Toronto and Sydney. To provide a one-stop comprehensive selection process for Hong Kong students studying overseas and returning to Hong Kong during holidays, the Force launched the PURE (Overseas) in December 2024.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market. It will review and assess the effectiveness of using different resources, and make suitable manpower deployment as appropriate.

3. The number of auxiliary police officers appointed as regular police officers over the past 2 financial years is tabulated as follows.

Financial Year	Number of auxiliary police officers appointed as regular police officers	
	Probationary Inspector	Police Constable
2023-24	31	32
2024-25 (As at 28 February 2025)	24	4

4. The figures for wastage of police officers in the Force over the past 2 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Reasons of leaving	2023-24		2024-25 (As at 28 February 2025)	
		No of leavers	Wastage rate	No of leavers	Wastage rate
Gazetted Officer Note 1	Retirement or end of contract	20	4.5%	13	2.9%
	Resignation	1	0.2%	2	0.5%
	Others Note 2	0	0%	0	0%
Inspectorate Officer	Retirement or end of contract	11	0.5%	16	0.6%
	Resignation	19	0.8%	31	1.2%
	Others Note 2	3	0.1%	5	0.2%
Junior Officer	Retirement or end of contract	439	1.8%	556	2.3%
	Resignation	215	0.9%	216	0.9%
	Others Note 2	149	0.6%	105	0.4%

Note 1: Gazetted officers refer to those of the rank of superintendent or above.

Note 2: Other reasons for leaving include transfer, dismissal, termination of service, death, retirement on invaliding and compulsory retirement.

The number of leavers in the Force, broken down by years of service, over the past 2 financial years is tabulated as follows:

Rank	Years of service	No of leavers	
		2023-24	2024-25 (As at 28 February 2025)
Gazetted Officer Note 3	10 years or below	0	0
	11-20 years	1	0
	21-30 years	5	5
	Over 30 years	15	10
Inspectorate Officer	10 years or below	14	21
	11-20 years	6	11
	21-30 years	4	9
	Over 30 years	9	11
Junior Officer	10 years or below	232	227
	11-20 years	78	39
	21-30 years	105	86
	Over 30 years	388	525

Note 3: Gazetted officers refer to those of the rank of superintendent or above.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB056

(Question Serial No. 2419)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated under this Programme that one of the primary responsibilities of the Police is to organise anti-crime publicity programmes to address specific crime problems, such as “Social Media Deception”, “E-shopping Fraud”, “Naked Chat Blackmail”, “Email Scam”, “Online Employment Fraud”, “Online Investment Fraud”, “Telephone Deception” (including Pretend Officials Telephone Deception), “Money Laundering”, “Youth Crime”, “Drug Abuse and Trafficking”, “Sexual Assault”, “Financial Intermediary Deception” and “Quick Cash Crime”. In this connection, will the Government provide this Committee with the following:

1. In tabular form, (i) the number of reported fraud cases, including “Social Media Deception”, “E-shopping Fraud”, “Naked Chat Blackmail”, “Email Scam”, “Online Employment Fraud”, “Online Investment Fraud”, “Telephone Deception” (including Pretend Officials Telephone Deception), “Money Laundering”, “Youth Crime”, “Drug Abuse and Trafficking”, “Sexual Assault”, “Financial Intermediary Deception” and “Quick Cash Crime”, (ii) the age range of the victims, (iii) the amount of monetary losses and (iv) the number of cases detected in the past year;

2. Details of any targeted plans the Police intends to implement in the coming year to strengthen enforcement actions against the above-mentioned types of deception?

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

1. In 2024, the number of cases reported to the Police Force, the number of cases detected, and the amount of losses (if applicable) for the offences mentioned in the question are as follows:

	Number of cases reported	Number of cases detected	Amount of losses (\$ million)
Deception	44 480	4 715	9,150.0
Social Media Deception	3 039	The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the number of cases detected by deception modi operandi.	662.5
E-shopping Fraud	11 559		356.3
Online Investment Fraud	3 930		2,261.7
Online Employment Fraud	3 853		797.2
Email Scam	197		104.1
Telephone Deception	9 204		2,911.0
<i>Pretend Officials</i>	<i>1 166</i>		<i>1,686.2</i>
Deception Involving Financial Intermediaries	58	11	16.4
Naked Chat Blackmail	2 434	Not available	80.2
Rape	77	75	Not applicable
Indecent Assault	1 185	912	Not applicable
Drug-related Offences (including serious and minor drug offences)	2 325	2 315	Not applicable
Offences related to “Quick Cash Crimes”			
Miscellaneous Theft	11 811	3 079	Not available
Shop Theft	8 764	5 561	Not available
Burglary	1 220	463	140.0
Pickpocketing	476	155	Not available
Snatching	64	39	Not available
Street Robbery (not involving the use of firearms, stun guns or pistol-like objects)	41	37	Not available
Street Deception	23	11	3.0
Taxi Robbery	6	6	Not available
“Head-bashing” Robbery	2	2	Not available

In 2024, the age ranges of victims for individual offences are as follows:

	Age of victims
Telephone Deception	14 to 108
Naked Chat Blackmail	11 to 77
Rape	9 to 51
Indecent Assault	0 to 94

- The Force will continue to focus on combating deception through a multi-pronged approach, including enhancing law enforcement, raising awareness through publicity and education and maintaining close collaboration with stakeholders, as well as local and overseas law enforcement agencies.

The increase of 11.7% in the number of deception cases in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023 (+45.1%

in 2022 compared with 2021 and +42.6% in 2023 compared with 2022), while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Force's efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results.

Regarding the interception of fraudulent funds, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre, in collaboration with local banks, successfully intercepted \$1.48 billion in fraudulent funds across 1 372 deception cases last year.

As for enforcement, a total of 10 496 persons were arrested for being involved in various types of deception cases and money laundering offences in 2024, representing an increase of 13.6%. Among them, about 70% were stooge account holders. The Force adopted approaches of concentrating resources, speeding up investigation and enhancing sentences to investigate cases with stooge accounts involved, including assigning cases involving the same stooge account holders to a single investigation team for follow-up enquiries, continuously applying technologies to assist frontline officers in enhancing investigation efficiency and expediting prosecution. Therefore, in 2024, 1 484 persons were prosecuted for the offence of money laundering, representing an increase of 226.9% compared with 2023. The Force also continued to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing for related cases. By the end of last year, the sentences of 47 stooge account holders had been increased by 10% to over 30% successfully (ranging from 3 to 13 months), resulting in 21 to 75 months of imprisonment. Furthermore, the Force stepped up publicity about the cases with successful application for enhanced sentences across various platforms to increase the deterrent effect.

To combat cross-border fraud syndicates using stooge accounts to collect fraudulent funds and launder money, the Force carried out several joint operations last year in collaboration with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies. Between May and August, joint operations with the Mainland Public Security Authorities, as well as Singaporean and Malaysian police forces, led to approximately 290 arrests. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception.

On publicity and education, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory over the past year through channels like ferries, minibuses, trams, a major logistics company's fleet and the Anti-scam Promotional Truck, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. To further promote the use of the self-developed "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from various organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. In December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring "The Little Grape" in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the "Anti-Money Laundering Month" again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled "Your Life. Your Choice" together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts. The Force has also received support

from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

In addition to strengthening ongoing intelligence exchanges and joint law enforcement operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies, the Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, as well as social media to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. Additionally, the Force will maintain its strong collaboration with stakeholders, including banks, the communications sector and regulatory bodies, to proactively explore all feasible solutions, such as improving existing legislation and initiatives, and will provide recommendations from a law enforcement perspective where necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB057

(Question Serial No. 0890)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the year-on-year increase of 46% in the number of job applications received by the Police Force in the 2023-24 financial year, will the Government provide this Committee with the following information:

1. The figures for staff wastage and vacancies, categorised by rank, in the Police Force for the past 2 financial years;
2. The number of applications received and appointments offered, categorised by rank, in the Police Force for the past 2 financial years;
3. The staff establishment and related expenditures of the Police Recruitment Division for the past 2 financial years;
4. The number of visitors to the Police Recruitment Centre and the expenditures involved for the past 2 financial years;
5. The respective numbers of applications received and appointments offered, categorised by rank, under the "Police University Recruitment Express" in the past 2 financial years;
6. For the "Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland)", please provide details including the mainland cities visited, the public response to the initiative, and the respective numbers of applications received and appointments offered, categorised by rank, in the past 2 financial years;
7. For the "Police University Recruitment Express (Overseas)" launched in December last year, please provide details of the public response to the initiative, as well as the respective numbers of applications received and appointments offered, categorised by rank; and

8. Any recruitment plans for this financial year aimed at encouraging more aspiring people to join the Force, along with the estimated expenditures to be involved.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1. The figures for wastage and vacancies in the Police Force are tabulated as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025)
Wastage of police officers	615	857	944

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025)
Actual establishment	33 210	33 260	33 090
Actual strength	27 299	27 254	27 155
Number of vacancies	5 911	6 006	5 935

2. Through various proactive recruitment strategies and activities, the numbers of applicants to the Force and those successfully recruited over the past 2 years are as follows:

Financial year	Number of applicants		Number of successful candidates	
	Probationary inspectors	Police constables	Probationary inspectors	Police constables
2022-23	3 391	4 606	165	554
2023-24	5 051	6 647	157	818
2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025)	5 129	6 491	148	817

The Force will continue to adopt proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become police officers, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

3. As at 28 February 2025, the establishment of the Police Recruitment Division in the past 2 years are tabulated as follows:

Actual establishment	Police officers	Civilian staff
80	65	15

The Force will review and assess the effectiveness of using different resources by re-establishing work priorities and redeploying staff to handle recruitment-related tasks. The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the expenditure involved.

4. In October 2022, the Force established the Police Recruitment Centre to provide the public with a channel to learn more about police work and obtain recruitment information. It also facilitates job applications by potential candidates through face-to-face consultation and experience session for selection process. Besides, the recruitment centre is widely utilised for recruitment-related work and regularly organises recruitment talks and police-related thematic exhibitions. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure incurred for the recruitment centre.
5. To facilitate university students' entry into the Force, the Force has been conducting publicity work on university campuses. The Force has organised the Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) at 12 local universities since 2022, offering recruitment information and conducting selection process. As at 28 February 2025, around 2 000 applications for the position of Probationary Inspector, Police Constable and Auxiliary Police Constable have been received through the PURE. Among them, around 40% of the applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, and around 10% of the applicants have joined the Force as probationary inspectors, police constables or auxiliary police constables. The Force has been proactively communicating with applicants to expedite the recruitment process.
6. Given the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing higher education in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the PURE (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment efforts have included visits to Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to attract Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force. The initiative received over 4 000 applications, with around 2 000 applicants submitting their applications and participating in the selection process (including for Probationary Inspector, Police Constable, and Auxiliary Police Constable) on-site. As at 28 February 2025, over 50% of these applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, while over 10% have successfully joined the Force as probationary inspectors, police constables or auxiliary police constables. The Force has been proactively communicating with applicants to expedite the recruitment process.
7. To further facilitate the comprehensive selection process for Hong Kong students studying at overseas universities and returning to Hong Kong during holidays, the Force launched the PURE (Overseas) for the first time in December 2024. A total of 51 students returned to Hong Kong and applied for the position of Probationary Inspector. As the initiative was launched only 3 months ago, the applicants are still undergoing various stages of the recruitment process.
8. The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become police officers, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force promotes recruitment and publicity through various media and social networking platforms, while regularly organising and participating in a diverse range of recruitment activities and programmes in Hong Kong. These include the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, the Sportsmen's Programme for Recruitment, the Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, the Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, the Community Outreach Recruitment Express, as well as setting up booths at education and careers expos. In September 2024, the Force launched the "HKPF

Recruit” mobile application to enhance recruitment efficiency through technology. The app allows members of the public to submit applications for police positions, track the selection process such as interview scheduling and result notifications, and register for recruitment activities, all via their mobile devices.

Targeting local students, the Force has launched the Police Mentorship Programme, PURE and Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, and has also co-organised the full-time “Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training” programme with 3 local education institutions. In February 2025, the Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local vocational training institution to identify people with an early interest in joining the disciplined services. In response to the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing studies in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the PURE (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment visits have been conducted in cities including Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to attract Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force. Furthermore, the Force has been conducting publicity and recruitment campaigns in overseas cities such as London, Toronto, and Sydney. To further facilitate the one-stop and comprehensive selection of Hong Kong students studying at overseas universities and returning to Hong Kong for holidays, the Force launched the PURE (Overseas) for the first time in December 2024.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market. It will review and assess the effectiveness of using different resources, make suitable manpower deployment and make provisions for publicity as appropriate. The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB058

(Question Serial No. 2120)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding efforts to combat “space oil”, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. Since the gazettal of “space oil” as a dangerous drug, the numbers of searches conducted, arrests made and prosecutions instituted against suspected users of “space oil”;
2. The expenditure incurred in procuring “space oil” rapid test kits for police officers, the cost per use and the total number of test kits used to date; and
3. Whether the use of such rapid test kits in entertainment premises will be enhanced to strengthen the crackdown on such behaviours; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 138)

Reply:

1. Since 14 February 2025, etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, and its 3 analogues have been listed as dangerous drugs upon gazettal. As at 28 February 2025, a total of 29 cases involving “space oil drug” were detected by the Police Force, resulting in the arrest of 39 persons, including 10 youths aged under 21.

The Force does not maintain figures on prosecutions.

2-3. With the Force's introduction of Etomidate Rapid Test Kits on 18 January 2025, on-duty frontline officers may conduct on-site rapid tests for suspected possession of "space oil drug". As at 28 February 2025, a total of 10 persons were arrested by the Force after using the test kits. Sufficient test kits have been made available to frontline officers for use where appropriate.

The expenditure on combating drug crimes forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB059

(Question Serial No. 2328)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (661) Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)

Programme: Not specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2025-26, the provision for Subhead 661 “Minor plant, vehicles and equipment” has substantially increased to \$1,063.3 million, representing a 389.4% rise compared to the revised estimate for 2024-25. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) For the provision of \$1,063.3 million, the specific procurement plan for equipment, including the types, specifications, unit prices and total quantities of various equipment, as well as their allocation to different police districts and specialised formations. Please also provide the expected service life of each type of equipment, along with a detailed explanation of the main reasons for and the urgency behind this substantial increase; and
- (b) How these equipment will enhance the enforcement efficiency of the Police Force, and the specific improvements in services that will benefit the public.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

The provision under Subhead 661 “Minor plant, vehicles and equipment” (block vote) covers capital expenditure for the procurement and replacement of minor plant and equipment (except administrative computer systems), such as operational gear and supplies for supporting the front line, as well as equipment and facilities for law enforcement gathering evidence and training. The estimate for Subhead 661 “Minor plant, vehicles and equipment” (block vote) in 2025-26 is higher than the revised estimate for 2024-25. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the procurement and replacement of the Police Force’s plant and equipment, including the Government’s installation of closed-circuit televisions at crime black spots across the territory.

To ensure that police officers can effectively cope with operational needs, the Force will timely evaluate operational circumstances and review officers’ operational needs for the procurement and replacement of plant and equipment.

Information on the procurement of various plant and equipment is part of the Force's operational details and are therefore inappropriate for disclosure.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB060

(Question Serial No. 0990)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

- (1) Regarding the identification of themes that address specific crime problems for Force-wide implementation as mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, what are the details of the work plan, manpower and expenditures this financial year for preventing telecommunications scams targeting new arrivals from the Mainland, international students and foreigners?
- (2) Scammers use “fraudulent mobile base station” technology to interfere with the networks of telecommunications service providers, impersonating companies or organisations to send phishing messages. Some even send fraudulent Short Message Service (SMS) messages with the prefix # to impersonate companies participating in the SMS Sender Registration Scheme. As there are views suggesting that the Police require additional resources to locate fraudulent mobile base stations, what are the details of the Police’s work plan to combat such scams? What is the estimated manpower allocation, and what technological facilities will be used?
- (3) Is there any plan to collaborate with the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) to upgrade the “SMS Sender Registration Scheme”, address technical loopholes and prevent scams involving “fraudulent mobile base stations”? If so, what are the details of the expenditures involved?
- (4) A survey has revealed that many members of the public have either not installed or have not used the Scameter+ after installation. What plans do the Police have to enhance the effectiveness of the publicity for the Scameter+? Are there plans to assist the public in downloading and using the app’s features through mobile kiosks or similar initiatives? If so, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon LIAO Cheung-kong, Martin (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

- (1) To effectively protect new arrivals in Hong Kong from falling victim to scams, the Police Force has launched a series of anti-fraud initiatives with various stakeholders,

including tertiary institutions, the banking sector, government organisations and relevant parties. These initiatives aim to raise awareness among new arrivals, helping them better identify and guard against scams. Since 2023, educational pamphlets specifically designed for new arrivals have been made available at public service kiosks of the Immigration Department for their access. Additionally, the Force has leveraged diverse social media platforms, such as the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre's official website, Xiaohongshu, Douyin and WeChat group chats, to disseminate the latest anti-deception information to new arrivals continuously.

Targeting newly arrived talents, the Force has partnered with the Labour and Welfare Bureau to organise regular anti-deception seminars for those admitted under the Top Talent Pass Scheme and organisations employing Mainland professionals. Leaflets have also been distributed to “Hong Kong drifters” through the Labour Department. Furthermore, the Force has assisted the Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) in establishing an anti-deception section on its official website and has co-organised anti-deception seminars with the HKTE to enhance scam awareness among newly arrived talents.

To support newly arrived Mainland students in identifying and preventing scams, the Force collaborated with tertiary institutions to strengthen promotional and educational efforts. For instance, in August 2023, Anti-Scam Learning Kits tailored for “Hong Kong drifter” students were launched. These learning kits, presented in the form of short videos and multiple-choice quizzes, provided information on common scams and guidance on detecting suspicious activities and messages. They also equipped students with the knowledge to respond promptly and seek assistance via the “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”, “Scameter+”, etc. when encountering suspicious calls or messages. The learning kits were introduced to new students through the student affairs offices of tertiary institutions and the Police Community Relations Office, ensuring that newly arrived students had access to the relevant information.

Furthermore, the Force has been actively collaborating with the student affairs offices of tertiary institutions and the Hong Kong Mainland Students Association (“the Association”) to promote anti-deception education on campuses. These efforts include updating anti-deception information in the annually published handbook for newly arrived Mainland students, distributing publicity materials and periodically disseminating anti-deception information through WeChat. The Force has also held regular meetings with various student affairs offices and the Association to discuss the implementation and effectiveness of anti-deception publicity campaigns targeted at newly arrived students. Additionally, the Force has arranged an ice cream van and a promotional truck to visit various university campuses to promote anti-deception and has organised seminars specifically for Mainland students at universities and institutions, with content covering advice on identifying common scam tactics, sharing real-life accounts from Mainland students who have fallen victim to scams, or playing videos featuring victims' self-narratives to share their experiences.

The Force has also designed the “Survival Guide” tailored for “Hong Kong drifter” students. With the assistance from various banks, particularly branches near university campuses, bank staff distribute and explain the guide to the Mainland students who open

accounts at banks. Bank staff also pay special attention to large-value fund transfers conducted by Mainland students to detect any suspicious transactions.

The Force also worked with Mainland China's National Anti-Fraud Center, the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange and the National Immigration Administration to enhance anti-deception publicity and education for Mainland students, both before and after their arrival in Hong Kong. Additionally, the Force will also collaborate with Mainland authorities to enhance the notification and mutual assistance mechanism for timely exchange of intelligence on scams and fraud cases. Discussions are underway with the National Anti-Fraud Center and other relevant units to extend similar measures to successful applicants of the Top Talent Pass Scheme.

The expenditure for anti-deception forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- (2) Regarding the phishing scam involving the "fraudulent mobile base station" mentioned in the question, since February 2025, the Force has received reports concerning suspected phishing Short Message Service (SMS) messages with prefix "#" that were allegedly sent by registered senders. The Force and the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) suspected that radio jammers were being used to commit crimes via "fraudulent mobile base stations." On 17 February 2025, the Force arrested a male in Mong Kok and seized the telecommunications equipment involved. Among the 31 related cases reported to the Force, only 2 resulted in financial losses, amounting to approximately \$30,000. Following the incident, the Force and OFCA held a joint press briefing to educate the public on how to guard against such scams. OFCA also pledged to work closely with telecommunications service providers to enhance monitoring of network signals for any irregularities.

The Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) will continue to monitor the latest technological advancements, introduce appropriate equipment and arrange its officers to receive regular professional training on technology crime investigation, digital forensics and cyber intelligence gathering. Frontline officers will also be provided with up-to-date information and relevant training on a regular basis.

- (3) The Force has been maintaining close communication with OFCA and offering advice from an enforcement perspective. The relevant expenditures form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.
- (4) To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed "Scameter" in September 2022 and its mobile application "Scameter+" in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded "Scameter+" by introducing a public reporting platform to enrich its database and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, "Scameter" had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public.

To further promote the use of “Scameter+”, the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and “Scameter+” recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. With assistance from the Water Supplies Department, a QR code for downloading “Scameter+” was included on quarterly water bill envelopes from October 2024 to January 2025. Over the past year, the Force also deployed anti-scam promotional trucks across various districts to disseminate anti-deception messages, with officers on-site to assist members of the public in downloading the application. The Force will continue its efforts to actively promote the use of “Scameter+.”

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB061

(Question Serial No. 1981)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under the Indicators for this Programme, the seizure of dangerous drugs such as heroin, ketamine and cocaine recorded a significant drop in 2024. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) The quantities of these drugs seized over the past 5 years;
- b) The reasons for the significant drop in 2024, including whether it is due to a notable decline in abuse trends or other specific factors; and
- c) In addressing one of the Matters Requiring Special Attention, where the Police plan to take strong and proactive enforcement actions against drug-related offences, attacking both the supply of and demand for drugs, particularly drug abuse and trafficking involving juveniles and young persons, the specific measures being implemented, as well as the effectiveness of these measures in combating youth drug abuse?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

- a) The quantities of heroin, ketamine and cocaine seized by the Police Force and the Customs and Excise Department over the past 5 years are as follows:

Type of drugs	Seizure of drugs (kilograms)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Provisional figures)
Heroin	189	410	372	566	252
Ketamine	294	1 302	2 175	1 009	1 602
Cocaine	512	1 079	2 418	2 643	2 677

Note: Figures between 2020 and 2023 were actual quantities confirmed by the Government Laboratory (GL) upon examination, while provisional figures for 2024 are pending examination by the GL.

- b) The seizures of these drugs fluctuated over the past 5 years, subject to numerous factors, including harvest yields, the legal, political and economic environment, as well as drug prices in drug-producing countries. Global drug markets were also affected by these factors.

Nevertheless, the Force has remained committed to combating dangerous drugs as one of the Commissioner's Operational Priorities.

The Force will continue to step up enforcement against drug trafficking through intelligence-led operations. In light of ever-evolving modes of transport adopted by overseas drug traffickers, the Force will maintain close intelligence exchange and conduct timely joint operations with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies.

- c) In 2024, there were 1 114 serious drug cases, representing a decrease of 3.4%. Of these cases, the number of arrested youths aged under 21 fell by 27.5% to 129 persons, including 31 students, representing a decrease of 35.4%. The number of youths involved in serious drug cases has been steadily declining since its peak in 2021. By the end of 2024, the cumulative decrease had reached 70.0%, with the decline in the number of students arrested being more significant than that of non-students arrested, showing a cumulative drop of 76.9%. However, there was a significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes for consumption of "space oil drug" in 2024. The Force detected 195 related cases and arrested 278 persons in total, including 61 youths in 2024. The Force introduced Etomidate Rapid Test Kits on 18 January 2025, enabling on-duty frontline officers to conduct on-site rapid tests for suspected possession of "space oil drug".

Since 14 February 2025, "space oil drug" has been listed as a dangerous drug upon gazettal. As at 28 February 2025, the Force has detected a total of 29 cases involving "space oil drug", resulting in the arrest of 39 persons, including 10 youths. On 17 February 2025, the Force detected the first case of manufacture of "space oil drug" after the legislative amendment, resulting in the arrest of 1 male and the seizure of about 400 suspected "space oil drug" capsules, 1.6 litres of suspected liquid etomidate and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia. In another case on 20 February 2025, the Force arrested 3 persons and seized about 12 suspected "space oil drug" capsules, 563.5 millilitres of suspected liquid etomidate and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia.

The Force will continue to enhance intelligence gathering on drug offences, including drug trafficking through social media, with a view to interdicting the supply of drugs by all means.

In addition to enforcement actions, the Force remains committed to the anti-drug education work. Apart from incorporating the information about "space oil drug" into school talks and the "interactive anti-drugs drama", the Force has also disseminated infographics and short videos on "space oil drug" to all schools in Hong Kong for showing to their students. Founded by the Force in 2021, the "Leadership Institute on Narcotics" (L.I.O.N.) trains 100 undergraduates and secondary students annually to

become anti-drug leaders. Now in its fourth cohort, L.I.O.N. continues to uphold its mission of fostering a drug-free culture.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB062

(Question Serial No. 1982)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Regarding the indicators of Road Safety, the number of summonses issued for moving and miscellaneous offences, as well as the number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued for moving offences, parking offences and prosecutions for speeding offences in 2024, recorded significant decreases compared to 2023. Meanwhile, the estimates for 2025 are based on the lower figures recorded in 2024. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

- a) The annual numbers of summonses and FPTs issued for the offences mentioned above over the past 5 years;
- b) The reasons for the significant decreases in the numbers of summonses and FPTs issued for the offences mentioned above, and whether the manpower deployment for these duties will be reviewed and revised. If so, the details; if not, the reasons; and
- c) In the Matters Requiring Special Attention, the Police Force indicates that it will enhance enforcement actions against red light jumping and speeding offences assisted by the red light camera system and speed enforcement camera system and work closely with the Transport Department on the planning and commissioning of the expansion of the systems. The Police also mentions that it will work closely with relevant government departments including the Transport Department and other stakeholders to develop and launch the Traffic e-Enforcement System. Are these plans related to the significant decreases mentioned above?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

a) The numbers of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) and summonses (moving and miscellaneous offences) issued by the Police Force over the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Number of FPTs and summonses issued					
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fixed penalty (moving offences)	471 957	527 923	545 358	548 670	479 015
Fixed penalty (parking offences)	2 707 869	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019	2 543 197
Summonses (moving and miscellaneous offences)	20 220	24 210	24 589	23 632	19 287

b)&c) Road safety is one of the Commissioner's Operational Priorities. The Force is committed to adopting a "result-oriented" enforcement approach when formulating the overall traffic policing strategy, with a view to enhancing road safety, reducing the number of persons killed and seriously injured in traffic accidents as well as changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users causing obstruction on roads.

The Force will closely monitor the trends and causes of traffic accidents and co-ordinate targeted operations. The Force will also regularly review and appropriately deploy manpower in light of the actual circumstances, while adopting other corresponding measures such as streamlining workflow and harnessing technology to facilitate traffic enforcement, thereby maximising the enforcement effectiveness.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB063

(Question Serial No. 0800)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Police launched the Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme in April 2024, aiming to strengthen overall district law and order by installing CCTVs in public places. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The total number of CCTVs installed at various crime black spots to date and the total expenditure incurred, with a breakdown of equipment costs, operational expenses and administrative expenses;
2. A list of the main crime black spots where CCTVs have been installed, along with the number of CCTVs installed in each district; whether the scheme has led to a reduction in crime in the respective districts; and whether it will be extended to more districts in the future;
3. It was previously stated that the use of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) System and facial recognition technologies is being studied to identify vehicles or persons involved in serious crimes or wanted by the Police. Please provide an update on the progress of the study, including whether it is being conducted by professionals or consultancy firms. If so, please provide details of the related administrative costs.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

A consolidated reply to questions 1 to 3 is as follows:

Under the “Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme” (the Scheme), the Police Force has been installing CCTVs across the territory since April 2024. To date, installations have commenced at 615 locations within the 18 districts that record relatively higher crime rates and pedestrian flow. The first phase of the Scheme, involving the installation of 2 000 CCTV units, is targeted for completion within 2025. As at the end of December 2024, the CCTV system had assisted the Force in detecting 122 criminal cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, resulting in 202 arrests.

Among the 28 cases of murder, robbery and burglary detected with the assistance of CCTV system, 90% were detected within an average of 2 days. This demonstrates that the CCTV system not only makes investigations more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from aiding in crime detection, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. The Force conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes (down by 3.2% to 27.4%) after the installation of CCTVs, showing the Scheme's positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

Meanwhile, the Force is now actively studying and drawing reference from the CCTV standards and enforcement practices of law enforcement agencies around the world. By incorporating more advanced technologies into the Scheme (including the Crowd Size Analysis System, facial recognition technology and the Automatic Number Plate Recognition System), the Force aims to maximise its contribution to the public interest. The Force has also formulated a set of comprehensive and robust internal operational guidelines to ensure a rigorous monitoring standard for the supervision of the CCTV system. In-house training programmes will be provided to authorised officers to ensure proper and effective operation of the video management system.

As the development of the system in the first phase, which involves the installation of 2 000 CCTV units across the territory, has been supported by the Force's existing resources, no specific breakdown of the expenditure is maintained. Details of the subsequent phases of the Scheme are yet to be finalised.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB064

(Question Serial No. 0845)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In recent years, the emerging drug “space oil” has gained rapid popularity, leading to a sharp increase in the number of abusers. Its misuse causes addiction, loss of consciousness, memory loss and irreversible brain damage. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The numbers of arrests and prosecutions following the gazettal of the Order to amend Dangerous Drugs Ordinance on 14 February 2025, which lists etomidate, the main ingredient of “space oil drug”, and its three analogues as dangerous drugs. Additionally, information on whether the gazettal has facilitated the Police in dismantling the supply chain and storage sites of space oil; if so, the figures;
2. Details of the expenditure incurred for the procurement of etomidate rapid test kits introduced by the Police on 18 January 2025 for detecting the presence of space oil in smoking devices, as well as the number of arrestees since the introduction of these test kits; and
3. Details on relevant public education works (particularly those targeting schools) by the Police, along with any assessments conducted to evaluate the effectiveness.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

1. Following the gazettal of etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, and its 3 analogues as dangerous drugs on 14 February 2025, the Police Force has detected a total of 29 cases involving “space oil drug” as at 28 February 2025, resulting in the arrest of 39 persons, including 10 youths. On 17 February 2025, the Force detected the first case of manufacture of “space oil drug” after the legislative amendment, resulting in the arrest of 1 male and the seizure of about 400 suspected “space oil drug” capsules, 1.6 litres of suspected liquid ETO and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia. In another case on 20 February 2025, the Force arrested 3 persons and seized about 12 suspected “space oil drug” capsules, 563.5 millilitres of suspected liquid etomidate and a batch of drug manufacturing paraphernalia.

The Force does not maintain figures on prosecutions.

2. To tackle the issue of “space oil drug”, the Force introduced Etomidate Rapid Test Kits on 18 January 2025, enabling on-duty frontline officers to conduct on-site rapid tests for suspected possession of “space oil drug”. As at 28 February, the Force had arrested a total of 10 persons after using the test kits.

The relevant expenditure on combatting drug crimes forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

3. The Force has disseminated infographics, animations and short videos on “space oil drug” to all schools in Hong Kong. The relevant education package has also been uploaded to the Police Public Page for public download. Additionally, the Force has organised the “Interactive Anti-Drug Theatre” for the third consecutive year. Over the past 2 years, anti-drug messages have been disseminated to more than 13 500 primary students in nearly 100 school performances. In March 2025, the Force staged its new play, “Interactive Anti-Drug Theatre - A Space Study Adventure”, at an experience session, to deliver anti-drug messages to over 200 principals, teachers and upper primary students, aiming to safeguard schools from the emerging “space oil drug”. The play will be staged at least 30 times in various primary schools within this academic year.

Furthermore, the Force will continue to disseminate anti-drug messages featuring the “space oil drug” through Police Community Relations Officers and School Liaison Officers. These efforts will include activities such as anti-crime campaigns and educational talks to engage the community and schools.

In addition, founded by the Force in 2021, the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” (L.I.O.N.) trains 100 undergraduates and secondary students annually to become anti-drug leaders. Now in its fourth cohort, L.I.O.N. continues to uphold its mission of fostering a drug free culture. The Force remains committed to anti-drug education work.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB065

(Question Serial No. 0989)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Force launched the HKSOS mobile application in January 2024. This application is specifically designed for various outdoor activities on land, sea or air, allowing users to directly connect to the 999 Reporting Centre with a single tap during emergencies, thereby reducing the risk of accidents. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following information:

1. The development cost of the HKSOS mobile application and its associated maintenance costs;
2. The total number of downloads of the HKSOS mobile application since its launch;
3. The total number of assistance requests received through the HKSOS mobile application since its launch, and whether statistics have been compiled on the types of accidents involved, such as mountaineering, aquatic activities, etc.; if so, please provide the relevant figures; and
4. The measures the Force will take to more effectively promote the HKSOS mobile application, encouraging more members of the public to download and use it, thereby reducing the risk of accidents.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1-3. Since its launch in January 2024, the HKSOS mobile application has been downloaded 129 000 times as at February 2025, safeguarding over 50 000 outdoor journeys on land, sea or air. Moreover, it has successfully assisted in 62 search and rescue operations, helping 142 citizens in distress, all of whom were involved in mountaineering activities. The development cost of the app was approximately \$7 million. The estimated maintenance expenditure for 2025-26, which covers the Government Cloud Infrastructure Services and the maintenance service of the whole system, amounts to around \$2.6 million.

The HKSOS app is currently the Police Force's only application specifically designed to ensure public safety and support inter-departmental search and rescue operations. As more citizens and tourists begin to use the HKSOS app, the Force must keep pace with advancements. Subject to resource availability, additional investment will be made to enhance the app's functionality, including improvements to its interface, map features and automatic accident detection system, to safeguard public safety.

4. To help more citizens and tourists become aware of the HKSOS app, the Force will, subject to resource availability, continue to promote the app through different channels, such as supporting international trail running competitions and advertising it on different media, including the Force's social media platforms and public transport. Moreover, the Force has sought the support of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to place more publicity materials about the HKSOS app in country parks, aiming to encourage more hikers to download it.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB066

(Question Serial No. 1717)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the various replacement plans of the Marine Police launches, including replacement programmes for High-speed Interceptor, Versatile Patrol Launch, Mobile Response and Command Platform, Divisional Logistic Launch, Small Boat Divisional Disguised Craft, Divisional Fast Patrol Craft Mark IV, Medium Patrol Launch Mark II and Personal Watercraft, etc., please provide the types, basic features (total length/crew members/speed), progress of replacement or estimated commissioning time, and estimates of expenditure of the new launches procured as from 2024, as well as the types of serving police launches that will be replaced by the new ones.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

Details of the launch replacement programmes are set out in the following table:

Type of police launch to be procured	Basic features (Length Overall (LOA)/ Operational Manning Standard (OMS)/Speed)	Replacement progress or estimated commissioning time	Total estimate (\$)	Type of serving police launch to be replaced
High-speed Interceptor	LOA: 14.2 metres OMS: 5 crew Speed: minimum 66 knots	3 vessels delivered in 2023; the remaining 2 vessels scheduled for delivery in 2025	126.31 million (5 vessels)	Damen Cougartek Sea Stalker
Versatile Patrol Launch	LOA: 37 metres OMS: 16 crew (including one Cook) Speed: minimum 25 knots	Contract signed in the fourth quarter of 2023; scheduled for delivery in 2025-2028	2,218.10 million (12 vessels)	Divisional Command Launch and Keka Launch

Type of police launch to be procured	Basic features (Length Overall (LOA)/ Operational Manning Standard (OMS)/Speed)	Replacement progress or estimated commissioning time	Total estimate (\$)	Type of serving police launch to be replaced
Mobile Response and Command Platform	LOA: 41 metres OMS: 19 crew (including one Cook) Speed: minimum 25 knots	Contract signed in the fourth quarter of 2023; scheduled for delivery in 2026	375.83 million (2 vessels)	Regional Training Launch
Catamaran Patrol Launch (previously known as Divisional Logistic Launch)	LOA: 15.6 metres OMS: 4 crew Speed: minimum 35 knots	Contract signed in the third quarter of 2024; scheduled for delivery in 2025-2028	541.98 million (11 vessels)	Seaspray Police Launch
Small Boat Divisional Disguised Craft	LOA: 7.9 metres OMS: 2 crew Speed: minimum 40 knots	Contract signed in the second quarter of 2023 and delivered in the fourth quarter of the same year	1.53 million (1 vessel)	Confiscated Speedboat
Divisional Fast Patrol Craft Mark IV	LOA: 10.5-12 metres OMS: 4 crew Speed: minimum 55 knots	Invitation to Tender gazetted in the fourth quarter of 2023; contract expected to be signed in the second quarter of 2025; scheduled for delivery in 2026-2028	265.94 million (12 vessels)	Divisional Fast Patrol Craft Mark I and II
Medium Patrol Launch Mark II	LOA: 16-20 metres OMS: 5 crew Speed: minimum 45 knots	Invitation to Tender expected to be gazetted in the second quarter of 2025; scheduled for delivery in 2028-2029	1,496.61 million (12 vessels)	Inshore Patrol Launch (6 vessels) and Medium Patrol Launch (6 vessels)
Personal Watercraft	LOA: 3.58 metres OMS: 2 crew Speed: minimum 35 knots	Delivered in the third quarter of 2024	4.51 million	Newly procured item

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB067

(Question Serial No. 0921)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this Programme, it is mentioned that the Force will organise anti-crime publicity programmes to address specific crime problems, including “Social Media Deception”, “E-shopping Fraud”, “Naked Chat Blackmail”, “Email Scam”, “Online Employment Fraud”, “Online Investment Fraud”, “Telephone Deception” (including Pretend Officials Telephone Deception), “Money Laundering”, “Youth Crime”, “Drug Abuse and Trafficking”, “Sexual Assault”, “Financial Intermediary Deception”, “Quick Cash Crime”, etc. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the expenditure and manpower involved in organising these publicity campaigns in 2024-25, as well as the effectiveness of the initiatives. Please also provide the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved for implementing such anti-crime publicity campaigns in 2025-26, the specific plans to be carried out, the targeted crime issues and the anticipated outcomes.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

In 2024, a total of 94 747 crimes were recorded, representing an increase of 4 471 cases or 5% compared with 2023. The overall detection rate was 30.4%, similar to that of 2023. Leaving deception cases aside, the overall crime figure recorded a drop of 185 cases (-0.4%) last year, while the detection rate rose by 1.7 percentage points to 47.9%, indicating that the increase in deception cases was the main reason for the increase in the overall crime figure and the decline in the overall detection rate.

Several traditional crimes, such as homicide, robbery, burglary, wounding and serious assault, serious drug offenses, theft, criminal damage, criminal intimidation and arson, recorded decreases in 2024. Quite a number of these crimes even reached new lows not seen in years or on record, while their detection rates were considerably high as well, with some even reaching the highest levels on record.

In 2024, 44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing an increase of 4 656 cases or 11.7% compared with 2023 (39 824 cases). Of these, about 60% (61.8%) were internet-related (27 485 cases). The increase of approximately 12% in 2024 was a marked

slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023 (+45.1% in 2022 compared with 2021 and +42.6% in 2023 compared with 2022), while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Police Force's efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results. The expenditure for anti-deception forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

The effectiveness of crime prevention and detection is integral to the Force's publicity and educational efforts. Over the past year, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through channels like ferries, minibuses, trams, a major logistics company's fleet and the Anti-scam Promotional Truck, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. To further promote the use of the self-developed "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. In December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring "The Little Grape" in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the "Anti-Money Laundering Month" again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled "Your Life. Your Choice" together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts.

To tackle youth crime, the Force places great importance on cultivating law-abiding awareness among young people and will continue to deepen collaboration with stakeholders, including disseminating crime prevention messages through schools and parents, as well as organising various activities and exchange programmes for youngsters in partnership with the Education Bureau (EDB) and through the Junior Police Call, to realise the concept that crime prevention and combating work should "start from a young age with continuous and concerted efforts" and to help youngsters become law-abiding citizens.

In the previous school year, the Force conducted seminars on anti-drugs, digital literacy, anti-deception and child protection for over 5 000 teachers, with the goal to provide the relevant training to 8 000 teachers this school year. Additionally, the Force has published the "Youth Crime Prevention Booklet" for three consecutive years and collaborated with the Education University of Hong Kong to prepare teaching materials, while co-organising training camps with the EDB to help students enhance their self-discipline and resilience.

When it comes to drug-related issues, the Force places particular focus on preventing youth involvement in drugs. To this end, the Force founded the "Leadership Institute on Narcotics" (L.I.O.N.) in 2021, nurturing 100 undergraduates and secondary students every year to become anti-drug leaders who shoulder the mission of promoting the anti-drug culture. Four cohorts of L.I.O.N. had been launched so far.

The Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, and social media like the Force's official accounts on Facebook and Xiaohongshu, the websites of the "CyberDefender" and the

Anti-Deception Coordination Centre, as well as the mobile application “Scameter+” to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB068

(Question Serial No. 0922)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the financial and staffing provision of the Police Force, the provision under Programme (4) for 2025-26 is \$1,075.0 million (18.1%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024-25. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for filling of vacancies, full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2024-25 and salary increments and increased cash flow requirements for the Government's territory-wide closed-circuit televisions installation at crime black spots and replacement of vessels, partly offset by a net decrease of 15 posts in 2025-26. Please provide this Committee with the details and a breakdown of the increased provision of \$1,075.0 million, as well as information on any relevant performance indicators.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

The increase in the estimate for Programme (4) "Operations" for 2025-26 is mainly due to the increased provisions for salaries (including some vacancies expected to be filled in 2025-26) and the increased cash flow requirements for capital account items, including the installation of closed-circuit televisions at crime black spots, as well as replacement of crafts.

The Police Force has no plans to formulate performance indicators for specific types of expenditure. The Force prioritises expenditure items flexibly in response to policing needs and implements its action plans through consolidating internal resources, streamlining procedures and leveraging technology.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB069

(Question Serial No. 0923)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under this Programme that the Hong Kong Police Force will, among others, enhance its capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the expenditure and manpower involved as well as its effectiveness for 2024-25. Please also advise on the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved, the respective plans, and whether additional manpower, training, new equipment and technological facilities will be required for enhancing the Force's capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation in the coming 2025-26; if so, the details.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

The Police Force is committed to taking proactive measures to combat technology crime and money laundering activities, primarily through the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB).

In 2024-25, the establishment of CSTCB and FIIB comprises police officers of ranks ranging from Police Constable to Chief Superintendent, with 420 and 217 officers (including 1 time-limited post^{Note} of Chief Superintendent) respectively. Among the establishment of CSTCB, 17 time-limited posts were created to provide network security support for the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games in 2025. In 2025-26, these 17 posts will be reduced from the establishment of police officers in CSTCB, while the establishment of police officers in FIIB will remain unchanged.

Note: The civil service establishment comprises posts on the permanent establishment as well as those on the non-permanent establishment (i.e. time-limited posts). Time-limited directorate posts are referred to as "supernumerary directorate posts", which are time-limited posts under the non-permanent establishment. This does not imply that such posts are excluded from the establishment.

The estimated expenditure for these 2 formations forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime are among Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2025. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Digital Policy Office and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force’s digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2024, 7 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On the international cooperation front, officers of the CSTCB attended the first International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Asia and South Pacific Working Group Meeting on Cybercrime for Heads of Units held in the Philippines in September 2024. The Chief Superintendent of CSTCB was elected Vice-Chairperson of the group to lead and work with Singapore and Fiji Police Forces in deepening cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies in the Asian and South Pacific region and to formulate long-term strategies for enhancing joint operational capabilities in combatting technology crimes. In October 2024, CSTCB and INTERPOL jointly organised the 14th INTERPOL Cybercrime Directors Workshop. The event provided a platform for law enforcement agencies and corporate entities to exchange ideas and collaborate on tackling cybercrime challenges, including issues related to deepfake technology, AI-related cybercrime, ransomware and malware threats.

In terms of staff training, the CSTCB regularly conducts training programmes to bolster police officers’ expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

Targeting and investigating money laundering activities is among the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities for 2025. The Force has been strengthening its professional capabilities in financial intelligence analysis and financial investigations, including the founding of the Money Laundering Expert Cadre in October 2022, a volunteer secondary duty cadre currently comprising over 50 officers to assist the frontline in investigating money laundering cases and to testify as expert witnesses in court hearings. In addition, funding was approved in 2021 for the FIIB to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform. This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the FIIB, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Evaluation Sharing Tool for banks to share information on corporate accounts involved in fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rates of identifying and combatting criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, which automates fund flow analysis to a high degree, enabling investigators to conduct fund flow and network analysis with greater efficiency.

To combat money laundering, the Force continues to strengthen the knowledge and techniques of police officers and industry stakeholders in financial investigations by regularly offering local and international training courses. Additionally, the Force has been refining collaboration mechanisms with local financial institutions, international organisations and law enforcement agencies from the Mainland and overseas to enhance efforts against money laundering. To further promote public-private cooperation in combating money laundering, the Force organised the Financial Institutions Anti-Money Laundering Forum in August 2024. Through panel discussions, the forum facilitated the exploration of collaborative strategies with representatives from various law enforcement agencies, financial regulators and financial institutions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB070

(Question Serial No. 0924)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As stated in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under this Programme, the Hong Kong Police Force will, among others, utilise social media platforms to disseminate crime prevention messages to the public. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the expenditure and manpower allocated to related work in 2024-25, as well as the effectiveness of these efforts. Please also provide the estimated expenditure and manpower to be allocated to such work in 2025-26, along with specific plans and new measures for disseminating crime prevention messages on social media platforms, particularly those targeting online scams.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

The Police Force has been utilising social media platforms to disseminate crime prevention messages to the public. These platforms are mainly managed by the Multi-media Communication Division of the Public Relations Wing, which is currently led by 1 Superintendent and staffed with 27 police officers and 2 contract staff members who are responsible for managing the Force's social media platforms. This Division conducts live broadcasts at large-scale events or operations and provides support to other Force formations as necessary.

In light of the latest crime trends, the Force has produced crime prevention videos and posts for social media to disseminate anti-deception and anti-crime messages in a simple and lively way, with the aims of raising awareness of crime prevention among people of all ages and levels, as well as interacting with the public in the fight against crime.

In 2024-25, the Force leveraged social media to launch various thematic anti-deception and anti-crime campaigns, including "Anti-Drugs Month", "Child Protection Month", "Anti-Money Laundering Month", "Anti-Deception Month" and "All-Round CyberDefence". These activities were organised both online and offline, along with conventional media and support of key opinion leaders on the Internet, to ensure wider public reach and more comprehensive publicity.

To help the public identify scams and online pitfalls, the Force continues its efforts to promote anti-deception and anti-crime messages as well as useful tools such as “Scameter+” and the expanded Suspicious Account Alert mechanism through various social media and channels. These efforts aim to enable the public to promptly assess deception risks and obtain fraud-related information, thereby raising public awareness against deception.

The Force now operates a total of 9 social media channels, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo, X, WeChat, WhatsApp Channels, Xiaohongshu and Douyin. A total of 4 689 posts were published across these platforms in 2024, attracting over 6.9 million followers as of 5 March 2025. This demonstrates effective engagement and dissemination of the Force’s anti-deception and anti-crime messaging.

In 2025-26, the Force intends to maintain communication with the public through various social media platforms, enhancing their understanding of police work and crime prevention awareness. In addition, it will keep abreast of the times by reviewing developments in the mass and social media, and will disseminate information via other emerging platforms when necessary. In the coming financial year, the Force will make optimum use of manpower and resources for managing the social media platforms. The expenditure to be involved falls under the total expenditure of Programme (1) “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”, and no specific breakdown is available.

The Force will continue to disseminate information on deception and crime prevention to the public through various channels. The effectiveness of publicity campaigns will be reviewed in a timely manner. To better deter deception and prevent crime, the Force will also strengthen collaboration with stakeholders to promote anti-deception and crime prevention for all.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB071

(Question Serial No. 3273)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

According to Programme (2), the Security Bureau aims to safeguard life and property. Recently, many university students have fallen victim to fraud, resulting in significant monetary losses. Regarding the new measures introduced to enhance students' awareness of anti-deception, what are the details of their effectiveness? What are the respective manpower and expenditure involved? Over the past 2 years, what efforts have been made to assist affected students in recovering their financial losses? Please provide the relevant details.

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 243)

Reply:

Among cases of university students being deceived, the majority involve Mainland students in Hong Kong falling victim to telephone scams. In 2024, a total of 318 newly arrived Mainland students suffered monetary losses due to telephone scams, with the total amount exceeding \$235.5 million.

To effectively protect new arrivals in Hong Kong from falling victim to scams, the Police Force has launched a series of anti-fraud initiatives with various stakeholders, including tertiary institutions, the banking sector, government organisations and relevant parties. These initiatives aim to raise awareness among new arrivals, helping them better identify and guard against scams. Since 2023, educational pamphlets specifically designed for new arrivals have been made available at public service kiosks of the Immigration Department for their access. Additionally, the Force has leveraged diverse social media platforms, such as the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre's official website, Xiaohongshu, Douyin and WeChat group chats, to disseminate the latest anti-deception information to new arrivals continuously.

To support newly arrived Mainland students in identifying and preventing scams, the Force collaborated with tertiary institutions to strengthen promotional and educational efforts. For instance, in August 2023, Anti-Scam Learning Kits tailored for "Hong Kong drifter" students were launched. These learning kits, presented in the form of short videos and multiple-

choice quizzes, provided information on common scams and guidance on detecting suspicious activities and messages. They also equipped students with the knowledge to respond promptly and seek assistance via the “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”, “Scameter+”, etc. when encountering suspicious calls or messages. The learning kits were introduced to new students through the student affairs offices of tertiary institutions and the Police Community Relations Office, ensuring that newly arrived students had access to the relevant information.

Furthermore, the Force has been actively collaborating with the student affairs offices of tertiary institutions and the Hong Kong Mainland Students Association (“the Association”) to promote anti-deception education on campuses. These efforts include updating anti-deception information in the annually published handbook for newly arrived Mainland students, distributing publicity materials and periodically disseminating anti-deception information through WeChat. The Force has also held regular meetings with various student affairs offices and the Association to discuss the implementation and effectiveness of anti-deception publicity campaigns targeted at newly arrived students. Additionally, the Force has arranged an ice cream van and a promotional truck to visit various university campuses to promote anti-deception and has organised seminars specifically for Mainland students at universities and institutions, with content covering advice on identifying common scam tactics, sharing real-life accounts from Mainland students who have fallen victim to scams, or playing videos featuring victims’ self-narratives to share their experiences.

The Force has also designed the “Survival Guide” tailored for “Hong Kong drifter” students. With the assistance from various banks, particularly branches near university campuses, bank staff distribute and explain the guide to the Mainland students who open accounts at banks. Bank staff also pay special attention to large-value fund transfers conducted by Mainland students to detect any suspicious transactions.

The Force also worked with Mainland China’s National Anti-Fraud Center, the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange and the National Immigration Administration to enhance anti-deception publicity and education for Mainland students, both before and after their arrival in Hong Kong. Additionally, the Force will also collaborate with Mainland authorities to enhance the notification and mutual assistance mechanism for timely exchange of intelligence on scams and fraud cases. Discussions are underway with the National Anti-Fraud Center and other relevant units to extend similar measures to successful applicants of the Top Talent Pass Scheme.

The expenditure for anti-deception forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

The Force does not maintain statistics on the amount of fraudulent funds recovered by student victims.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB072

(Question Serial No. 2490)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of deception cases in Hong Kong has continuously hit record highs in recent years. Despite the Police Force's efforts to raise the public's anti-deception awareness through frequent updates on social media and posters across the city, telephone scam remains prevalent, with even highly educated or professional individuals falling victim to scammers using "old tricks in new ways". In 2017, the Police established the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) to specifically combat deception and co-ordinate the publicity efforts of all relevant departments in fighting the crime. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of deception cases, number of victims, amounts involved, as well as the numbers of cases detected and persons arrested for the previous financial year, with a breakdown by type of crime (e.g. telephone scam, online scam, etc.);
2. In tabular form, the number of deception cases involving multi-level marketing and fraudulent financial intermediaries, the amount involved, as well as the numbers of cases detected, and the persons arrested and prosecuted for the previous financial year;
3. In light of the increasingly rampant online scams, whether additional manpower and resources will be solicited for the ADCC in 3 key areas, namely, intelligence sharing and law enforcement, cross-agency collaboration, as well as publicity and education, so as to prevent deception, strengthen law enforcement, intercept fraudulent funds and raise public awareness of anti-deception; if so, the details; if not, the reasons;
4. As of October last year, approximately 120 000 applications under the Top Talent Pass Scheme had been approved, with around 75 000 talents having arrived in Hong Kong. Furthermore, by the end of last year, more than 75 000 dependants had been approved to join them, with over 150 000 people having arrived in total. The influx of these talents and their dependants is significant. However, concerns have been raised that many talents may hesitate to seek police assistance immediately after falling prey to scammers due to potential language barriers. In this regard, please advise whether the Police has any plans to collaborate with the Hong Kong Talent Engage to enhance anti-deception publicity efforts

tailored to the “Hong Kong drifters”, so as to extend the reach of such campaigns and heighten the newcomers’ alertness to deception;

5. Whether the Police will consider introducing a “one-touch” emergency function on its WeChat official account to facilitate new talents in reporting deception crimes or other cases directly; and

6. Whether the Police will explore the use of artificial intelligence to develop “digital police officers” to improve communication with the new arrivals.

Asked by: Hon SHANG Hailong (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

1. The total number of deception cases reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved and the number of arrests for 2024 are tabulated as follows:

	2024
Number of cases	44 480
Detection rate	10.6%
Amount involved (\$)	9.15 billion
Number of arrests	8 692

The common types of deception as well as the amount involved for 2024 are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases	Amount of losses (\$ million)
E-shopping Fraud	11 559	356.3
Online Investment Fraud	3 930	2,261.7
Online Employment Fraud	3 853	797.2
Social Media Deception	3 039	662.5
Phishing Scam	2 731	53.5
Email Scam	197	104.1
Telephone Deception	9 204	2,911.0

The Force does not maintain the breakdowns of the numbers of victims and arrests by individual types of deception.

2. The number of deception cases reported to the Force involving financial intermediaries, the amount involved, the number of cases detected and the number of arrests for 2024 are tabulated as follows:

	2024
Number of cases	58
Amount involved (\$ million)	16.4
Number of cases detected	11
Number of arrests	29

No cases of deception involving multi-level marketing practices were reported to the Force in 2024.

3. In 2024, 44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing an increase of 4 656 cases or 11.7% when compared with 2023 (39 824 cases). Of these, 61.8% were internet-related. The increase of approximately 12% in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023 (+45.1% in 2022 compared with 2021 and +42.6% in 2023 compared with 2022), while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Force's efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results.

Regarding the interception of fraudulent funds, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), in collaboration with local banks, successfully intercepted \$1.48 billion in fraudulent funds across 1 372 deception cases last year.

As for enforcement, a total of 10 496 persons were arrested for being involved in various types of deception cases and money laundering offences in 2024, representing an increase of 13.6%. Among them, about 70% were stogie account holders. The Force adopted approaches of concentrating resources, speeding up investigation and enhancing sentences to investigate cases with stogie accounts involved, including assigning cases involving the same stogie account holders to a single investigation team for follow-up enquiries, continuously applying technologies to assist frontline officers in enhancing investigation efficiency and expediting prosecution. Therefore, in 2024, 1 484 persons were prosecuted for the offence of money laundering, representing an increase of 226.9% compared with 2023. The Force also continued to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing for related cases. By the end of last year, the sentences of 47 stogie account holders had been increased by 10% to over 30% successfully (ranging from 3 to 13 months), resulting in 21 to 75 months of imprisonment. Furthermore, the Force stepped up publicity about the cases with successful application for enhanced sentences across various platforms to increase the deterrent effect.

To combat cross-border fraud syndicates using stogie accounts to collect fraudulent funds and launder money, the Force carried out several joint operations last year in collaboration with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies. Between May and August, joint operations with the Mainland Public Security Authorities, as well as Singaporean and Malaysian police forces, led to approximately 290 arrests. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception.

On publicity and education, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory over the past year through channels like ferries, minibuses, trams, a major logistics company's fleet and the Anti-scam Promotional Truck, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. To further promote the use of the self-developed "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from various organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the

application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. In December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring “The Little Grape” in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the “Anti-Money Laundering Month” again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled “Your Life. Your Choice” together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts.

The Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, and social media like the Force’s official accounts on Facebook and Xiaohongshu, the websites of the “CyberDefender” and the ADCC, as well as the mobile application “Scameter+” to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the establishment in light of the latest crime trends and policing needs.

4. To effectively protect new arrivals in Hong Kong from falling victim to scams, the Force has launched a series of anti-fraud initiatives with various stakeholders, including tertiary institutions, the banking sector, government departments/organisations and related units. These initiatives aim to raise awareness among new arrivals, helping them better identify and guard against scams. Since 2023, educational pamphlets specifically designed for new arrivals have been made available at public service kiosks of the Immigration Department for their access. Additionally, the Force has leveraged diverse social media platforms, such as the ADCC’s official website, Xiaohongshu, Douyin and WeChat group chats, to disseminate the latest anti-deception information to new arrivals continuously.

Targeting newly arrived talents, the Force has partnered with the Labour and Welfare Bureau to organise regular anti-deception seminars for those admitted under the Top Talent Pass Scheme and organisations employing Mainland professionals. Leaflets have also been distributed to “Hong Kong drifters” through the Labour Department. Furthermore, the Force has assisted the Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) in establishing an anti-deception section on its official website and has co-organised anti-deception seminars with the HKTE to enhance scam awareness among newly arrived talents.

The Force also worked with Mainland China’s National Anti-Fraud Center, the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange and the National Immigration Administration to enhance anti-deception publicity and education for Mainland students, both before and after their arrival in Hong Kong.

Additionally, the Force will also collaborate with Mainland authorities to enhance the notification and mutual assistance mechanism for timely exchange of intelligence on scams and fraud cases. Discussions are underway with the National Anti-Fraud Center

and other relevant units to extend similar measures to successful applicants of the Top Talent Pass Scheme.

- 5-6. Any members of the public, including new arrivals in Hong Kong, who suspect they have fallen victim to a scam, can report to the Force through its e-Report Centre or call 999 for assistance in emergencies. In addition, members of the public can call the Anti-Scam Helpline 18222 for enquiries or use the “Scameter” tool on the “CyberDefender” website or its mobile application version “Scameter+” to verify suspicious phone numbers or websites.

The Force will continue to update its anti-deception strategies, including leveraging technological solutions to combat deception, in response to the latest defrauding methods and trends.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB073

(Question Serial No. 2034)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (114) Transport and Traffic

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

It is mentioned that one of the duties of the Police Force is to work closely with relevant agencies and government departments to identify technological solutions to address serious parking offences. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) the respective numbers of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking, both electronic and handwritten, issued by the Police Force in the 5 police regions in each of the past 3 years;
- (b) the respective numbers of enforcement actions against illegal road racing conducted and the number of FPTs issued by the Police Force in the 5 police regions in each of the past 3 years; and
- (c) regarding the trial scheme on the average speed camera system conducted by the Transport Department which was relaunched in 2020 and completed, the number of speeding cases successfully collected through this trial scheme and whether the scheme will be formally launched; if so, the proposed locations, construction costs and timetable for the installation of the system; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

- (a) The numbers of both electronic and handwritten fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking issued by the Police Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) by Police Region for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking					
	2022		2023		2024	
	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic
Hong Kong Island	81 520	542 480	21 622	501 545	8 965	388 112
Kowloon East	28 931	526 486	3 509	439 529	794	296 785
Kowloon West	76 906	934 178	10 686	949 590	4 316	868 003
New Territories South	52 787	518 108	11 655	459 872	3 834	386 628
New Territories North	47 929	554 146	10 318	604 693	2 949	582 811
Total	288 073	3 075 398	57 790	2 955 229	20 858	2 522 339

- (b) The figures on enforcement actions taken by the Force against races or trials of speed for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

2022	2023	2024
11	6	18

The figures on enforcement actions taken by the Force against speeding by Police Region for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Enforcement figures on speeding		
	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	29 380	19 793	15 977
Kowloon East	43 132	50 576	47 487
Kowloon West	70 508	58 089	36 676
New Territories South	47 211	53 898	41 397
New Territories North	75 052	71 215	53 431
Total	265 283	253 571	194 968

- (c) Based on the data from the average speed camera system installed at West Kowloon Corridor (westbound) and Tsuen Wan Road (westbound), the two locations recorded a daily average of about 1 000 and 2 000 speeding vehicles respectively between May and August 2022. To facilitate a wider use of the average speed camera system for law enforcement purposes, the Government is examining the final arrangements for system

implementation, including manpower deployment for system operation and arrangement of repair and maintenance.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB074

(Question Serial No. 2635)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
(4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the Police Force's annual expenditure since the financial year 2018-19, including:

1. The actual number of newly recruited gazetted officers, inspectorate officers and junior officers, as well as the number of vacant posts;
2. The estimated and actual expenditure for the procurement of police equipment (such as armoured vehicles and pistols);
3. The recurrent expenditure for the maintenance of the aforementioned equipment; and
4. A detailed breakdown of the recurrent expenditure allocated to "Crime Prevention".

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. The actual number of newly recruited officers and the number of vacant posts in the Police Force from 2018-19 to 2024-25 are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Actual number of newly recruited officers			Vacant posts		
	Junior officers	Inspectorate officers	Gazetted officers Note 1 and 2	Junior officers	Inspectorate officers	Gazetted officers Note 1
2018-19	1 121	220	-	1 342	98	0^
2019-20	705	169	-	2 109	126	0^
2020-21	596	158	-	4 702	438	44
2021-22	484	170	-	5 284	452	40
2022-23	554	165	-	5 471	401	39
2023-24	818	157	-	5 655	320	31
2024-25 (As at 28 Feb 2025)	817	148	-	5 633	275	27

Note 1: Gazetted officers refer to those of the rank of superintendent or above.

Note 2: Gazetted officers are promoted to their ranks through internal promotion rather than direct recruitment; hence, no data on actual recruitment numbers for such officers is maintained.

2-3. The estimated and actual expenditure for the procurement and maintenance of police equipment involves details of operation and deployment, which are classified as sensitive information. It is inappropriate to disclose such information.

4. A detailed breakdown of the expenditure allocated to Programme (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime involves internal operational details. It is inappropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2744)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Many members of the public have expressed concerns about the increasing prevalence of telephone scams in Hong Kong, noting that fraudsters are employing increasingly diverse tactics. Even with the Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards and the Short Message Service (SMS) Sender Registration Scheme in place, telephone deception persists. Crime statistics released earlier by the Police also revealed a significant surge in telephone scams last year, underscoring the challenges of fraud prevention. There have also been public complaints that substantial public funds allocated to combat telephone deceptions have delivered unsatisfactory results. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of telephone deception cases reported to the Police in each of the past 3 financial years, including the number of cases detected and undetected, the total number of persons arrested, prosecuted and convicted, as well as the year-on-year changes in these figures;
2. Further to the above, the total amount involved in these cases, the amount successfully recovered, and the amount yet to be recovered;
3. The additional estimated expenditure allocated to combating telephone deceptions; and
4. Although the current "Scameter+" application has gained increasing public attention, some media surveys indicate that as many as 50% of respondents are unaware of its existence. On the other hand, widely used call-filtering applications available in the market, such as Whoscall and Jima Caller ID, provide features that identify the nature of incoming calls, such as commercial advertisements, scam alerts ("beware of scams"), or calls from government departments and public organisations. These features allow users to decide whether to answer the call. Will the Government consider leveraging the extensive telecommunications database to incorporate similar features into "Scameter+" to enhance its functions and encourage more downloads? If so, please provide details, including the expenditure involved. If not, please explain the reasons.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

1-2. The total number of deception cases reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved, the number of arrests and the amount of fraudulent funds intercepted for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023 (against the preceding year)	2024 (against the preceding year)
Number of cases	27 923	39 824 (+42.6%)	44 480 (+11.7%)
Detection rate	12.0%	11.9% (-0.1 percentage point)	10.6% (-1.3 percentage points)
Amount involved (HK\$)	4.85 billion	9.18 billion (+89.3%)	9.15 billion (-0.3%)
Number of arrests	4 112	7 043 (+71.3%)	8 692 (+23.4%)
Fraudulent funds intercepted (HK\$)	1.36 billion	1.29 billion (-5.1%)	1.48 billion (+14.7%)

The number of telephone deception cases reported to the Force and the amount involved for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023 (against the preceding year)	2024 (against the preceding year)
Number of cases	2 831	3 213 (+13.5%)	9 204 (+186.5%)
Amount involved (HK\$ million)	1,076.5	1,102.8 (+2.4%)	2,911.0 (+164.0%)

The Force does not maintain statistics on prosecutions, convictions and the amounts of fraudulent funds recovered by the victims concerned. There is no breakdown of the detection rate, the number of arrests and the amount of fraudulent funds intercepted by individual types of deception cases.

3. The expenditure for combating telephone deception forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.
4. To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed "Scameter" in September 2022 and its mobile application "Scameter+" in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded "Scameter+" by introducing a public reporting platform and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, "Scameter" had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public, whereas

“Scameter+” had alerted users to over 90 000 suspicious calls and over 600 000 suspicious websites. Meanwhile, from September 2022 to the end of last year, the Force requested telecommunications service providers to intercept more than 8 300 local and non-local suspicious phone numbers, as well as nearly 30 000 suspicious website links.

“Scameter” has undergone continuous upgrades and expansion of its functions since its launch. Currently, “Scameter+” is equipped with blocking functions, as well as call alert and website detection functions that automatically identify scam calls and fraudulent websites. Upon detecting potential scams or cybersecurity risks, the application sends real-time notifications to remind users not to answer the calls or browse the websites. Additionally, “Scameter” includes a public intelligence platform, allowing members of the public to report scams and pitfalls, thereby further enriching its database.

In addition, the Force has been working closely with the banking industry to make effective use of the data available from “Scameter”. In November 2023, the first phase of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism was introduced, initially covering transactions conducted via the Faster Payment System. Subsequent expansions in the second and third phases, launched in August and December 2024 respectively, extended the mechanism to cover internet banking, physical branch transactions and automated teller machines (including cash deposit machines), providing the public with more comprehensive protection. Before a transaction is confirmed, the mechanism issues an alert to remind users of potential fraud risks. At present, the mechanism covers the vast majority of the public’s day-to-day transfers.

The Force will continuously review and enhance the functions of “Scameter”, with a view to strengthening anti-fraud measures in a proactive manner.

To further promote the use of “Scameter+”, the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and “Scameter+” recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. With assistance from the Water Supplies Department, a QR code for downloading “Scameter+” was included on quarterly water bill envelopes from October 2024 to January 2025. Over the past year, the Force also deployed Anti-scam Promotional Truck across various districts to disseminate anti-deception messages, with officers on-site to assist members of the public in downloading the application. The Force will continue its efforts to actively promote the use of “Scameter+”.

The Force proactively explores all practicable measures to effectively combat and prevent deception cases, including optimising existing measures, maintaining close communication with stakeholders, and offering advice from an enforcement perspective when necessary.

The expenditures on the development and maintenance for “Scameter” and “Scameter+” form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB076

(Question Serial No. 2669)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the specific figures related to the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre's efforts over the past 3 years in intercepting fraudulent payments and persuading potential victims to halt their fund transfers to fraudsters, including the number of cases successfully intercepted and prevented each year, the total amounts intercepted and prevented, the average and highest amounts involved, as well as the types of scams. Additionally, in cases where scams were successfully intercepted or prevented, were there instances where fraudsters were arrested based on the relevant leads?

What specific plans and initiatives does the Police Force have in the coming year to enhance efforts in combating scams? Have performance indicators been set for these plans and initiatives? If so, what are the specific plans, initiatives and performance indicators? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

The statistics related to fraudulent payments intercepted by the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) and the launch of the "Upstream Scam Intervention" scheme over the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases intercepted	888	989	1 372
Amount of fraudulent payments intercepted (\$)	1.36 billion	1.29 billion	1.48 billion
Average amount of fraudulent payments intercepted (\$)	1.532 million	1.304 million	1.079 million
Since the launch of the “Upstream Scam Intervention” scheme in May 2023			
Number of cases with victim’s fund transfer prevented		654	2 397
Amount of fund transfer prevented (\$)		20 million	180 million
Average amount of fund transfer prevented (\$)		29,000	75,000

In 2024, the largest amount of fraudulent payments intercepted in a single deception case was \$146 million. In August 2024, through the “Upstream Scam Intervention” scheme, the ADCC identified a German company as a potential victim and discovered that the employee of which had fallen prey to an email scam. With the assistance of the bank concerned, the ADCC intercepted the transfer of \$146 million in fraudulent proceeds to local bank accounts.

In 2024, the largest amount of fund transfer prevented in a single deception case was \$7.4 million. In September 2024, the ADCC identified a local accountant as a potential victim through the “Upstream Scam Intervention” scheme. Initially, the victim ignored the alert and, under the scammer’s instructions, relocated to a hotel. Police officers located the victim and stopped the transfer of \$7.4 million from the victim’s account. Subsequent investigation revealed that the victim had fallen prey to a “Pretend Official” telephone deception and was under the scammer’s control. In the same month, a 19-year-old male suspect involved in the case was arrested.

The primary types of deception that involved interception of fraudulent proceeds or dissuasion of victims from continuing fund transfers include social media deception, telephone deception and investment fraud.

“Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” and “combating deception and quick cash crime” remain among the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities for 2025. The Commercial Crime Bureau and its ADCC, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau, the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau, as well as the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts, are all dedicated to cracking down on deception, including the cases related to technology crime.

In 2024, 44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing an increase of 11.7% compared with 2023. Among them, 61.8% were Internet-related. Deception cases accounted for 46.9% of the overall number of crimes. When it comes to the trend of deception cases over the past few years, the increase of approximately 12% in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023, while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Force’s efforts to

combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results.

Over the past year, the Force has collaborated with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), the banking industry, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) and telecommunications service providers to launch a series of enhanced measures with a view to fortifying defences against deception for members of the public.

The Force, together with the HKMA, announced in August 2024 that the scope of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism had been extended from the Faster Payment System to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions, and it was further expanded in December to include transactions at Automated Teller Machines. The mechanism has covered the majority of the public's day-to-day transfers. If the recipient's account number is labelled as suspicious in the "Scameter" database, the system will send a high risk alert to users before confirming the transaction.

The ADCC and the Anti-Deception Alliance continue to play a pivotal role. By collaborating with local banks, they proactively send alerts to potential victims. A total of 3 051 ongoing deception cases had been intervened successfully by the end of last year. Also, the ADCC successfully intercepted \$1.48 billion of fraudulent payments in 1 372 deception cases last year.

As regards the enhanced measures implemented in collaboration with the OFCA and the telecommunications industry, starting from October 2024, Hong Kong residents must use the "iAM Smart" mobile application to verify identities for real-name registration for pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards, otherwise telecommunications service providers will conduct verification manually before activating the relevant PPS cards. Under the latest measure launched since 31 December 2024, when members of the public answer calls made from newly activated local PPS cards, they will first hear a voice alert message stating, "This call is made from a new PPS card", so as to raise public vigilance against phone scams.

In addition, the Force continued to request telecommunications service providers to block and intercept telephone numbers and websites suspected to be involved in deception cases. By the end of last year, nearly 30 000 suspicious website links and over 8 300 suspicious phone numbers had been intercepted.

To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force upgraded the self-developed "Scameter+" in February 2024 to include a public reporting platform and issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, "Scameter" had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. To further promote the use of "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads.

As for enforcement, a total of 10 496 persons were arrested for being involved in various types of deception cases and money laundering offences in 2024, representing an increase of 13.6%. Among them, about 7 700 persons were stooze account holders. The Force adopted approaches of concentrating resources, speeding up investigation and enhancing sentences to investigate cases with stooze accounts involved, including assigning cases involving the same stooze account holders to a single investigation team for follow-up enquiries, continuously applying technologies to assist frontline officers in enhancing investigation efficiency and expediting prosecution. Therefore, in 2024, 1 484 persons were prosecuted for the offence of money laundering, a 2.3-fold increase compared with 2023. The Force also continued to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing for related cases. By the end of last year, the sentences of 47 stooze account holders had been increased by 10% to over 30% successfully, resulting in 21 to 75 months of imprisonment. Furthermore, the Force stepped up publicity about the cases with successful application for enhanced sentences to increase the deterrent effect.

To combat cross-border fraud syndicates using stooze accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money, the Force mounted joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies last year. These operations included the one conducted with the Mainland Public Security Authorities from May to July leading to a total of 261 arrests, and the other one executed with the Singapore police force in August resulting in 7 arrests in Hong Kong, involving the laundering of over HK\$330 million and HK\$100 million respectively. Additionally, a joint operation was initiated with the police forces of Singapore and Malaysia in June, neutralising a transnational deception syndicate in Malaysia using malware to commit crimes, with 21 arrests made in Hong Kong. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception.

On publicity and education, over the past year, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through the anti-deception ferry “Ping On”, anti-deception minibuses, tram tours, a major logistics company’s fleet, Anti-scam Promotional Truck and so on, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. Last December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring “The Little Grape” in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the “Anti-Money Laundering Month” again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled “Your Life. Your Choice” together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

While the Force has no plans to establish specific key performance indicators for combating deception, it remains committed to prioritising efforts in this area. In addition to strengthening ongoing intelligence exchanges and joint law enforcement operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies, the Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, as well as social media to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. Additionally, the Force will maintain its strong collaboration with stakeholders, including banks, the communications sector and regulatory

bodies, to proactively explore all feasible solutions, such as improving existing legislation and initiatives, and will provide recommendations from a law enforcement perspective where necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB077

(Question Serial No. 2670)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Will the Police Force please provide an update, as of March this year, on the specific progress of the investigation into the JPEX case, including the total number of victims involved, the total amount involved, whether any suspects have been successfully arrested and prosecuted, the total amount of criminal proceeds and property recovered, and the amount of proceeds of crime that has been frozen?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

As at 28 February 2025, the Police Force had received a total of 2 636 related reports, involving approximately \$1.616 billion. A total of 80 persons were arrested, with frozen assets amounting to about \$228 million, including cryptocurrencies valued at approximately \$14.5 million. Other frozen assets included property, luxury vehicles, bank account balances and cash.

Of the 2 636 informants, 666 indicated they would not pursue the case further; 659 could not be reached despite multiple attempts by the Force; and the remaining 1 311 have given statements.

The Force's investigation is ongoing, including seeking legal advice from the Department of Justice regarding evidence against persons involved in the case.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB078

(Question Serial No. 0104)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. In the establishment ceiling for 2025-26, there is a reduction of 199 non-directorate posts. Please advise on the reason(s) for the reduction, the specific posts and the relevant expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

1. In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 199 non-directorate posts (involving creation of 32 civilian posts, and reduction of 208 disciplined service posts and 23 civilian posts) in the Police Force. Of these, 153 posts fall under Programme (1) "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community". Details on the number of posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Senior Superintendent	-1	PPS 54 – 54b	154,775 – 163,905
Superintendent	-2	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	-3	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/ Inspector	-7	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Station Sergeant	-3	PPS 24 – 33a	52,015 – 76,830
Sergeant	-11	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	-181	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	-208		
Total (civilian staff)	-23	MPS 1 – 11 MOD 0 – 13	15,180 – 28,225 15,175 – 19,755
Total	-231		

The reduction in staff establishment mentioned above is the result of the Force's enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through various management measures and digitalisation. These include the re-prioritisation of duties, internal redeployment, streamlining of work processes, and the adoption of technological solutions, enabling the implementation of new policies and initiatives.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB079

(Question Serial No. 0105)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Under the Matters Requiring Special Attention this year, it is stated that the Police Force will formulate the Strategic Directions 2025-2027.

The Strategic Directions are expected to be announced early this year. Please provide specific details, the follow-up actions to be taken for their formulation and implementation, as well as details of the internal and external surveys conducted over the past 5 years.

2. Please advise on the current establishment of the Force and the number of vacancies that remain unfilled. Please also provide information on the publicity efforts and initiatives for recruiting police officers, along with the estimated expenditure and its allocation.

3. The Police have been arranging for its members to participate in training programmes outside the territory. Please provide information on the number of officers who have attended such training, the locations, courses and expenditure incurred over the past 5 years, as well as the respective future plans.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

1. The Police Force formulates Strategic Directions to address various strategic issues and challenges, enabling the Force to adapt to an evolving operating environment. Each Strategic Direction, together with its strategic objectives, outlines the priorities the Force must focus on to realise its strategic vision. Based on the Strategic Directions 2025-2027, major formations and their commanders will formulate and implement corresponding policing policies in alignment with the Force's overall Strategic Directions to maintain the safety and stability of Hong Kong.

Over the past 5 years, the Force conducted internal and external surveys in 2021 and 2024. The survey cycle aligns with the Strategic Planning Process cycle. These surveys aim to understand the needs and expectations of internal and external customers

to improve the quality of the Force’s services. Through its Force Survey Strategy, the Force effectively and consistently gathers feedback from both the public and internal staff on aspects such as service/performance, policing priorities, customer satisfaction and potential areas for improvement. The Public Opinion Survey focuses on public perceptions of safety, confidence in the Force and overall performance. The Police Service Satisfaction Survey evaluates respondents’ impressions of the Force after interacting with police officers. Meanwhile, the Staff Opinion Survey gauges Force members’ perceptions and opinions on the Force’s values and other related matters. The 2024 surveys revealed that the public continued to highly recognise the overall performance of the Hong Kong Police Force. Similarly, the Staff Opinion Survey indicated that the Force has consistently maintained high standards across various aspects.

2. As at 28 February 2025, the establishment and number of vacancies for police officers are tabulated as follows:

Actual establishment	Actual strength	Number of vacancies
33 090	27 155	5 935

The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become police officers, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force promotes recruitment and publicity through various media channels and social networking platforms, while regularly organising and participating in a diverse range of recruitment activities and programmes in Hong Kong. These include the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, the Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, the Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, the Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, and the Community Outreach Recruitment Express, as well as setting up booths at Education and Careers Expo. In September 2024, the Force launched the “HKPF Recruit” mobile application to enhance recruitment efficiency through technology. The app allows members of the public to submit applications for police positions, track the selection process such as interview scheduling and result notifications, and register for recruitment activities, all via their mobile devices.

Targeting local students, the Force has launched the Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express and Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, and has also co-organised the full-time “Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training” programme with 3 local education institutions. In February 2025, the Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a local vocational training institution to identify people with an early interest in joining the disciplined services. In response to the increasing number of Hong Kong students pursuing studies in the Mainland in recent years, the Force launched the Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland) in November 2022. Recruitment visits have been conducted in cities including Guangdong, Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan to attract Mainland-based Hong Kong students to join the Force. Furthermore, the Force has been conducting publicity and recruitment campaigns in overseas cities such as London, Toronto, and Sydney. To further facilitate the comprehensive selection of Hong Kong students studying at overseas universities and returning to Hong Kong for holidays, the Force

launched the “Police University Recruitment Express – Overseas” for the first time in December 2024.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market. It will review and assess the effectiveness of using different resources, make suitable manpower deployment and make provisions for publicity as appropriate. The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the expenditure involved.

3. “Preparing the Workforce to Meet Emerging Challenges” is one of the 4 Strategic Directions promulgated by the Force. The Force actively maintains close collaborative training partnerships with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies and academic institutions to enhance the expertise and capabilities of its officers, equipping them to address future challenges across various domains.

Between 2020 and 2024 (from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024), the Force arranged for about 770 officers to participate in a range of training programmes overseas, with a total expenditure of about HK\$19 million.

These training programmes included vocational skills development, management and command courses, as well as field studies and exchange opportunities. Training locations spanned countries in Europe, Oceania and Asia.

The Force’s human resources strategy places a strong emphasis on broadening the horizons of officers through exchanges with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies. As such, the Force will continue to organise regular exchange and training programmes with the Mainland and overseas counterparts, as well as other academic institutions, in order to enhance officers’ professionalism and law enforcement efficiency effectively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB080

(Question Serial No. 0106)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Under the Matters Requiring Special Attention this financial year, it is stated that the Police Force will strengthen its digital capabilities and information technology proficiency.

Please provide details on how the Police will enhance the use of innovative technology in its procurement policy, the current level of advancement of police equipment in use and the expenditure on new arms and protective equipment, along with related initiatives for the current financial year.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

1. The digital policing initiatives of the Police Force focuses on leveraging technology to meet the public demand, streamline workflows and enhance investigative capabilities. To ensure the Force's technological capabilities advance with the times, the technical standards of market products and their alignment with the requirements of digital policing are evaluated during the procurement process.

The Force will review the global trend of technology development and the application of technology by law enforcement agencies around the world from time to time. Suitable accoutrements and equipment will be introduced in a timely manner based on actual operational needs to further enhance the Force's operational effectiveness. The Force has reviewed its equipment regularly to ensure that it copes with the actual operational needs of the officers. It will conduct procurement in strict accordance with the government's established procurement procedures. Information on the procurement of equipment is part of the Force's operational deployment details. It is thus inappropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB081

(Question Serial No. 0107)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide information on the innovative technologies adopted by the Police over the past 5 years to assist in crime investigations and improve detection rates, along with the relevant expenditures.
2. Please advise whether there are plans to enhance the use of innovative technologies to strengthen investigative capabilities, such as purchasing drones to assist with inspection and patrolling duties, and adopting more modern technologies to support the Police's security work. Please also provide details on the specific plans and expenditures related to technological applications and staff training.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. The Police Force has been proactively exploring the use of technology to prevent and combat various types of crime, including deception and technology crime. In September 2022, the Force established the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub (e-Hub) to provide a one-stop platform for handling electronic reports related to deception and technology crimes. Leveraging an enhanced computer system, the e-Hub conducts correlation analysis to identify clusters of related cases for consolidated investigation, with a view to focusing resources more swiftly and effectively, thereby enhancing the Force's overall capability in tackling deception and technology crime. Since July 2024, the e-Hub has further enhanced investigation efficiency by coordinating frontline efforts and consolidating information on stooge accounts. Cases involving the same stooge account holders are now assigned to a single investigation team for follow-up.

To enhance the effectiveness of frontline criminal investigation units in handling deception and technology crime cases, the Force has, in recent years, launched a series of internal electronic systems. These include the "e-Statement System", "Bank Document Digitisation System", "Bank Statement Conversion and Analysis System", "Electronic Stop-Payment Mechanism System", "Crypto Asset Tracing System (CryptoTrace)" and the "Digital Forensics Laboratory System".

In 2021, the Force received funding to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform. This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Evaluation Sharing Tool. This platform enables banks to share corporate account information on fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rate of identifying and combatting criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, providing police officers with a highly automated tool for fund flow analysis. This system significantly enhances the efficiency of fund flow and network analysis, enabling investigators to perform their work more effectively.

To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed “Scameter” in September 2022 and its mobile application “Scameter+” in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded “Scameter+” by introducing a public reporting platform and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, “Scameter” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. Another key feature of the Scameter platform is the “Suspicious Account Alert” mechanism. In August 2024, the Force and the HKMA jointly announced its extension from the Faster Payment System to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions. This initiative was further expanded in December to include transactions at Automated Teller Machines. The mechanism has covered the vast majority of the public’s day-to-day transfers. If the recipient’s account number is labelled as suspicious in the “Scameter” database, the system will send a high risk alert to the user before confirming the transaction.

To further enhance public safety, combat crime comprehensively, and strengthen the Force’s operational effectiveness in maintaining public order, the Police Force has implemented the government-led “Territory-wide Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Installation Scheme” in collaboration with various government bureaux and departments. The initiative was carried out following the coordination of inter-departmental resources and in accordance with the guiding principles provided by the “Task Force on District Governance” chaired by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration.

Since April 2024, the Force has been rolling out the installation of CCTV cameras across the territory. CCTVs have initially been installed at 615 locations with high crime figures and pedestrian flow in all 18 districts in Hong Kong, with the first phase, involving the installation of 2 000 cameras, set to be completed in 2025. As of December 2024, the CCTV system had played a key role in solving 122 criminal cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, leading to the arrest of 202 persons. Notably, among the 28 cases of homicide, robbery and burglary, 90% were solved within 2 days, demonstrating that the CCTV system not only makes investigations more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from aiding in crime detection, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. To understand the relevant figures, the Force conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes (down by 3.2% to 27.4%) after the installation of CCTVs, showing the Scheme's significant positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

The expenditure related to the use of technology in combating deception and technology crimes forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

2. The Force reviews global technological developments and the use of technology by law enforcement agencies worldwide from time to time. Suitable accoutrements and equipment will be introduced in a timely manner based on actual operational needs to further enhance the Force's operational effectiveness. In recent years, leveraging advanced technology in tandem with the Government's initiative to develop the low-altitude economy, the Force has proactively adopted drone technology to support and optimise a wide range of policing duties. At present, drones are being deployed in various operational scenarios, including search and rescue missions in remote and marine environments, crime prevention patrols in rural areas and evidence collection to assist criminal investigations.

In terms of staff training, the Force has been accredited by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) as a Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) Approved Training Organisation, the first government department in Hong Kong to receive this recognition. This enables the Force to provide "Advanced Rating" training to its officers. Currently, more than 600 officers in the Force are licensed remote pilots with CAD-recognised Advanced Ratings, and the Force plans to continue strengthening training efforts in this area.

The Force regularly reviews its operational needs and plans to procure various types of drones and related safety equipment. It will continue to make full use of innovations in drone technology and research outcomes to enhance operational efficiency and further improve overall public safety.

For the Territory-wide CCTV Installation Scheme, the Force is actively studying and drawing reference from the CCTV standards and enforcement practices of law enforcement agencies around the world. By incorporating more advanced technologies into the Scheme, the Force aims to maximise its contribution to the public interest. In October 2024, the Force had utilised the Crowd Size Analysis System for the first time during the Halloween events in Lan Kwai Fong. The system used video analytic functions to perform real-time crowd density assessments, effectively leveraging technology to improve the efficiency of the Force's crowd management operations. The Force has also formulated a set of comprehensive and robust internal operational guidelines to ensure a rigorous monitoring standard for the supervision of the CCTV system. In-house training programmes will be provided to authorised officers to ensure the proper and effective operation of the video management system.

The procurement of accoutrements and equipment as well as relevant staff training are supported by the Force's existing resources. The related expenditure and quantities are part of the Force's operational deployment details. It is thus inappropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB082

(Question Serial No. 0108)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

1. Regarding the number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued by the Police Force in the past 2 years, the number of FPTs for moving offences last year dropped by nearly 50 000 compared to the same period in the previous year, while the number of FPTs for illegal parking decreased by nearly 400 000.

Please explain the reasons and provide details of the types of promotional and educational activities on road safety conducted by the Police over the past 5 years, along with the expenses.

2. Please set out in tabular form the total amounts of fixed penalties paid by members of the public for moving offences and illegal parking over the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. Road safety is one of the Commissioner's Operational Priorities. The Police Force is committed to adopting a "result-oriented" enforcement approach when formulating the overall traffic policing strategy, with a view to enhancing road safety, reducing the number of persons killed and seriously injured in traffic accidents as well as changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users causing obstruction on roads.

During traffic enforcement, the Force allocates resources flexibly, adheres to established guidelines and considers the specific circumstances of individual case to take appropriate control and enforcement actions, thereby achieving the abovementioned objectives.

The Force has been promoting road safety in collaboration with various stakeholders through a multi-agency approach. Its promotional and educational initiatives include producing and broadcasting television and online publicity video clips, affixing publicity wraps on traffic signal controllers, organising road safety talks at primary and secondary schools and elderly centres, as well as disseminating information via social media platforms. The expenditure involved falls under the Programme “Road Safety”. No specific breakdown is available.

2.

Total amount of FPTs issued from 2020 to 2024					
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Amount of fixed penalty for illegal parking (\$ million)	867	1,057	1,076	964	814
Amount of fixed penalty for moving offences (\$ million)	198	221	229	229	202

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB083

(Question Serial No. 0109)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. The number of Mainland visitors arrested for crimes increased by more than 600 in 2024 compared to 2023.

Please provide information on the reasons for the increase, the types of crimes committed, the property losses incurred, the number of persons successfully prosecuted and the sentences imposed. Similarly, for non-Mainland visitors who committed crimes in Hong Kong, please provide details on their nationalities, the relevant figures as outlined above and the actions taken by the Police to reduce such crimes.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

In 2024, a total of 2 161 Mainland visitors were arrested, representing an increase of 613 persons or 39.6% compared to 2023. The rise was mainly attributed to a significant increase of over 7 million in the total number of Mainland visitors to Hong Kong (which reached 34.04 million, up by 27.2%). In fact, the number of arrestees only accounted for an extremely small proportion (approximately 0.006%) of the total number of Mainland visitors. By comparison, a total of 1 254 visitors from other regions were arrested, representing an increase of 131 persons or 11.7%. This represented approximately 0.01% of the total number of visitors from other regions, nearly double (1.9 times) the corresponding figure for Mainland visitors.

Among the arrested Mainland visitors, 949 persons, the majority of whom were stooge account holders, were involved in deception and money laundering (up by 179.9%). Other offences included shop theft, involving 160 arrestees (down by 18.4%); serious immigration offences, involving 139 arrestees (up by 27.5%); and miscellaneous theft, involving 129 arrestees (down by 17.8%). Meanwhile, the primary offences committed by arrested visitors from other regions included shop theft, involving 259 arrestees (down by 5.1%); miscellaneous theft, involving 131 arrestees (up by 31%); and wounding and serious assault, involving 99 arrestees (up by 8.8%).

To combat the criminal activities of syndicates recruiting and arranging for Mainlanders to open stooze accounts in Hong Kong, the Police Force conducted joint operations with Mainland Public Security Authorities between May and July 2024. These efforts resulted in the arrest of 261 persons across both jurisdictions, associated with 535 deception cases in Hong Kong and involving over HK\$330 million in laundered fraudulent funds. In September 2024, the Force also dismantled a cross-border money laundering syndicate operating in Hong Kong and the Mainland through timely intelligence exchanges facilitated by the Anti-Deception Alliance and the banking sector, leading to the arrest of 14 persons.

The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchanges with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat offences involving people entering Hong Kong as visitors.

The Force does not maintain statistics on matters such as the amounts of related losses, or the numbers of prosecutions and convictions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB084

(Question Serial No. 0110)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. The Police Force has developed the HKSOS mobile application to enhance the efficiency of rescue teams during search and rescue operations. Please provide details on the number of users who have downloaded the app to date, its effectiveness and the expenditure incurred by the Police for its development.

Please also provide information on the number and expenditure of other security-related applications developed in the past, and advise whether there are plans to further develop or streamline the use of these applications; if so, estimated resources to be allocated for such plans.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

Since its launch in January 2024, the HKSOS mobile application has been downloaded 129 000 times as at February 2025, safeguarding over 50 000 outdoor journeys on land, sea or air. Moreover, it has successfully assisted in 62 search and rescue operations, helping 142 citizens in distress. The development cost of the app was approximately \$7 million.

The HKSOS app is currently the Police Force's only application specifically designed to ensure public safety and support inter-departmental search and rescue operations. As more citizens and tourists begin to use the HKSOS app, the Force must keep pace with advancements. Subject to resource availability, additional investment will be made to enhance the app's functionality, including improvements to its interface, map features and automatic accident detection system, to safeguard public safety.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB085

(Question Serial No. 0114)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. What is the current safety index of Hong Kong? Over the past 5 years, what specific measures have been implemented, and what expenditures have been incurred by the Police in areas such as counter-terrorism (CT) deployment, the enhancement of CT strategies, action plans, cross-departmental co-operation, intelligence gathering, training and public education?

2. How do the Police evaluate the risk of terrorist infiltration in the community? What measures will be implemented to enhance CT training and prepare for long-term CT operations, and what specific work and resources will be required?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

1&2. The current Terrorist Threat Level of Hong Kong is “Moderate”, which means that there is the possibility of an attack, but there is no specific intelligence suggesting that Hong Kong is likely to be a target.

Strengthening CT efforts is one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2025. The Police Force will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to enhance CT strategies and action plans through strengthening cross-departmental co-operation, intelligence gathering, as well as training and public education, thereby enhancing CT preparedness. The specific initiatives implemented over the past 5 years include:

Enhancement of CT Strategies and Action Plans

The HKSAR Government’s CT strategy covers four areas, namely prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, setting out the roles and responsibilities of various government departments in combating terrorist threats.

Cross-departmental Co-operation and Intelligence Gathering

To strengthen CT preparedness, the HKSAR Government has set up a new three-tier prevention framework, comprising the Chief Executive CT Steering Group, the

Secretary for Security CT Co-ordinating Group and several inter-departmental working groups. This new framework has optimised Hong Kong's overall CT strategies by effectively enhancing inter-departmental co-operation and the HKSAR Government's capability in intelligence gathering, thus strengthening Hong Kong's terrorism prevention and CT responsiveness on all fronts.

Training and Public Education

The Security Bureau, in collaboration with the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU), co-ordinates regular cross-agency CT exercises that simulate various types of unforeseen events, such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, bomb threats and terrorist attacks, enhancing various departments' response and co-ordination capabilities in handling such incidents. In addition, training on emergency handling, such as the Critical Incident Command Courses, has been provided to commanders from government emergency services to strengthen their command skills.

On public education, the Force actively co-ordinates the efforts of member departments through the ICTU, with particular emphasis on the promotion of CT publicity and education to the public, including the important messages regarding "Stay Vigilant to Bomb", "Run, Hide, Report" and "Spot and Report". In June 2022, the ICTU launched the "CT Reporting Hotline" and "CT reward" to encourage members of the public to provide terrorism or violence-related information and raise public awareness of "Spot and Report". To enhance promotion of the CT Reporting Hotline and increase the coverage of CT information, the ICTU has promoted CT information through various platforms such as television, various mobile applications and websites, public transport, large outdoor television screens and billboards, allowing the general public to better understand CT and security messages.

The estimated expenditure on CT initiatives involves details of the internal operations of government departments, and is thus not suitable for public disclosure.

The HKSAR Government remains highly concerned about the potential terrorist threats in Hong Kong, and will closely monitor the trend of global and local terrorism to guard against such threats.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB086

(Question Serial No. 1350)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work of tackling deception, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of deception cases reported to the Police Force, the detection rate and the number of arrests for each of the past 3 years;
2. A breakdown of the amount involved in these cases each year, categorised by the types of deception cases;
3. The staff establishment of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), as well as any new measures for preventing and tackling deception;
4. Whether the feasibility of adding auto-blocking functions for fraudulent calls and messages to the mobile application "Scameter+" will be studied, in order to reduce the public's risk of falling victim to scams; if so, the details; if not, the reasons;
5. Whether co-operation with Mainland authorities will be pursued to address online "caller ID spoofing" technology, in order to tackle the issue of scam calls at the source; if so, the details; if not, the reasons; and
6. Whether the arrangement of the voice alert message stating "this call is made from a new prepaid SIM card" will be reviewed, in order to safeguard the public's right to make calls; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon YANG Wing-kit (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1. The number of deception cases reported to the Police Force, the detection rate and the number of arrests for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases	27 923	39 824	44 480
Detection rate	12.0%	11.9%	10.6%
Number of arrests	4 112	7 043	8 692

2. The common types of deception cases reported to the Force as well as the amount of losses for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Overall Deception Cases	27 923	39 824	44 480	4,850	9,180	9,150
Online Deception	19 599	27 314	27 485	3,073.8	5,345.9	4,924.1
<i>E-shopping Fraud</i>	8 735	8 950	11 559	74.1	190.5	356.3
<i>Online Investment Fraud</i>	1 884	5 105	3 930	926.5	3,267.4	2,261.7
<i>Online Employment Fraud</i>	2 884	3 518	3 853	459.1	760.2	797.2
<i>Social Media Deception</i>	3 605	3 372	3 039	779.0	745.4	662.5
<i>Phishing Scam (Note 1)</i>	/	4 322	2 731	/	102.4	53.5
<i>Email Scam</i>	391	208	197	751.1	163.6	104.1
Telephone Deception	2 831	3 213	9 204	1,076.5	1,102.8	2,911.0
<i>Impersonating Customer Service (Note 2)</i>	/	/	5 575	/	/	1,040.3
<i>Guess Who</i>	1 540	2 237	1 153	114.1	188.7	79.2
<i>Pretend Officials</i>	1 290	969	1 166	962.3	913.8	1,686.2
<i>Detained Son</i>	1	7	3	0.07	0.3	0.6

Note 1: Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

Note 2: Figures related to “Impersonating Customer Service” telephone deception have been maintained by the Force since 2024.

3. In 2024-25, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) had an establishment of 84 posts, with 40 being permanent establishment and 44 on secondment from different Force formations.

“Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” and “combating deception and quick cash crime” remain among the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities for 2025. The Commercial Crime Bureau and its ADCC, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau, the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau, as well as the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts, are all dedicated to cracking down on deception, including the cases related to technology crime.

When it comes to the trend of deception cases over the past few years, the increase of approximately 12% in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023, while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Force’s efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results.

Over the past year, the Force has collaborated with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), the banking industry, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) and telecommunications service providers to launch a series of enhanced measures with a view to fortifying defences against deception for members of the public.

The Force, together with the HKMA, announced in August 2024 that the scope of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism had been extended from the Faster Payment System to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions, and it was further expanded in December to include transactions at Automated Teller Machines. The mechanism has covered the majority of the public's day-to-day transfers. If the recipient's account number is labelled as suspicious in the "Scameter" database, the system will send a high risk alert to users before confirming the transaction.

The ADCC and the Anti-Deception Alliance continue to play a pivotal role. By collaborating with local banks, they proactively send alerts to potential victims. A total of 3 051 ongoing deception cases had been intervened successfully by the end of last year. Also, the ADCC successfully intercepted \$1.48 billion of fraudulent payments in 1 372 deception cases last year.

As regards the enhanced measures implemented in collaboration with the OFCA and the telecommunications industry, starting from October 2024, Hong Kong residents must use the "iAM Smart" mobile application to verify identities for real-name registration for pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards, otherwise telecommunications service providers will conduct verification manually before activating the relevant PPS cards. Under the latest measure launched since 31 December 2024, when members of the public answer calls made from newly activated local PPS cards, they will first hear a voice alert message stating, "This call is made from a new PPS card", so as to raise public vigilance against phone scams.

In addition, the Force continued to request telecommunications service providers to block and intercept telephone numbers and websites suspected to be involved in deception cases. By the end of last year, nearly 30 000 suspicious website links and over 8 300 suspicious phone numbers had been intercepted.

To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force upgraded the self-developed "Scameter+" in February 2024 to include a public reporting platform and issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, "Scameter" had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. To further promote the use of "Scameter+", the Force launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads.

As for enforcement, a total of 10 496 persons were arrested for being involved in various types of deception cases and money laundering offences in 2024, representing an increase of 13.6%. Among them, about 7 700 persons were stooge account holders. The Force adopted approaches of concentrating resources, speeding up investigation and enhancing sentences to investigate cases with stooge accounts involved, including

assigning cases involving the same stooge account holders to a single investigation team for follow-up enquiries, continuously applying technologies to assist frontline officers in enhancing investigation efficiency and expediting prosecution. Therefore, in 2024, 1 484 persons were prosecuted for the offence of money laundering, a 2.3-fold increase compared with 2023. The Force also continued to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing for related cases. By the end of last year, the sentences of 47 stooge account holders had been increased by 10% to over 30% successfully, resulting in 21 to 75 months of imprisonment. Furthermore, the Force stepped up publicity about the cases with successful application for enhanced sentences to increase the deterrent effect.

To combat cross-border fraud syndicates using stooge accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money, the Force mounted joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies last year. These operations included the one conducted with the Mainland Public Security Authorities from May to July leading to a total of 261 arrests, and the other one executed with the Singapore police force in August resulting in 7 arrests in Hong Kong, involving the laundering of over HK\$330 million and HK\$100 million respectively. Additionally, a joint operation was initiated with the police forces of Singapore and Malaysia in June, neutralising a transnational deception syndicate in Malaysia using malware to commit crimes, with 21 arrests made in Hong Kong. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception.

On publicity and education, over the past year, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through the anti-deception ferry “Ping On”, anti-deception minibuses, tram tours, a major logistics company’s fleet, Anti-scam Promotional Truck and so on, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. Last December, the Force also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring “The Little Grape” in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the “Anti-Money Laundering Month” again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled “Your Life. Your Choice” together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

4. To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed “Scameter” in September 2022 and its mobile application “Scameter+” in February 2023. “Scameter” has undergone continuous upgrades and expansion of its functions since its launch. Currently, “Scameter+” is equipped with blocking functions, as well as call alert and website detection functions that automatically identify scam calls and fraudulent websites. Upon detecting potential scams or cybersecurity risks, the application sends real-time notifications to remind users not to answer the calls or browse the websites. Additionally, “Scameter” includes a public intelligence platform, allowing members of the public to report scams and pitfalls, thereby further enriching its database. By the end of last year, “Scameter” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public, whereas

“Scameter+” had alerted users to over 90 000 suspicious calls and over 600 000 suspicious websites.

5. Following the establishment of a dedicated working group with the OFCA and telecommunications operators, the Force has implemented a number of initiatives. These include blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852” and sending text or voice alerts to users who receive such calls. To combat telephone deception, the Force has also conducted timely intelligence-led operations. In August 2024, the Force dismantled 4 operation centres and arrested 11 persons, including 6 Malaysian visitors suspected of “conspiracy to defraud”, “using false instruments” and “money laundering”. During the operation, 87 modem pools, commonly referred to as “cat pools”, and more than 80 000 stored-value telephone cards were seized. Investigations revealed that the 6 visitors were recruited by an overseas deception syndicate to register local telephone cards in Hong Kong using false identity documents between April and August. These telephone cards, supported by the “cat pools”, were used to make and send international fraudulent calls and messages that appeared to originate from Hong Kong. It is believed that these telephone cards were used in approximately 400 cases of “Impersonating Customer Service” deception, involving over \$60 million. The 6 visitors have been charged with 1 count of “conspiracy to defraud”. The Force will continue to maintain close intelligence exchanges with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to conduct timely joint operations targeting deception and technology crime.
6. As mentioned in part 3 above, since 31 December last year, members of the public will first hear a voice alert message stating, “This call is made from a new PPS card”, when they answer calls made from newly activated local PPS cards, so as to raise public vigilance against phone scams. To combat and prevent deception, the Force will proactively explore all feasible measures, including ways to improve existing legislation and initiatives. The Force will also maintain close collaboration with relevant stakeholders and provide recommendations from a law enforcement perspective where necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB087

(Question Serial No. 1351)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under Programme (1) that a multi-agency approach will continue to be adopted to address the problems of juvenile delinquency and youth involvement in crime and drugs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of youths arrested for committing criminal offences in each of the past 3 years and up to the present;
2. The number of youths aged under 21 arrested for drug offences in each of the past 3 years and up to the present, as well as their proportion among all arrestees for drug offences;
3. The number of youths aged under 21 arrested for the illegal sale and possession of "space oil" in each of the past 3 years and up to the present; and
4. New measures to curb youth involvement in crime and drug-related activities, particularly initiatives to prevent youths from vaping "space oil"?

Asked by: Hon YANG Wing-kit (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. The numbers of youths (aged 10-20) arrested for criminal offences over the past 3 years are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of arrested youths	2 774	3 041	2 840

2. The numbers of youths (aged 10-20) arrested by the Police Force for drug offences (including serious and minor drug offences), as well as their percentage among all drug arrestees, over the past 3 years are as follows:

Arrestees involved in drug offences (including serious and minor drug offences)	2022	2023	2024
Number of arrested youths	452	297	271
Percentage among all drug arrestees	12%	9.7%	9.6%

3. The numbers of youths (aged 10-20) arrested by the Force for offences involving “space oil drug” over the past 3 years, broken down by unlawful sale and unlawful possession of etomidate, are as follows:

Number of youths arrested for offences involving “space oil drug”	2022	2023	2024
Unlawful sale	0	0	3
Unlawful possession	0	2	58

4. In 2024, there were 1 114 serious drug cases, a decrease of 3.4%. The number of youths arrested in connection with serious drug cases had dropped by 27.5% to 129 persons, of whom 31 persons were students, a drop of 35.4%. The number of youths involved in serious drug cases has been steadily declining since its peak in 2021. By the end of 2024, the cumulative decrease had reached 70%, with the decline in the number of students arrested being more significant than that of non-students arrested, showing a cumulative drop of 76.9%. However, there was a noticeable increase in the use of e-cigarettes for consumption of “space oil drug” in 2024. According to the provisional figures from the Government Laboratory, as at 31 December 2024, the Force had detected 195 related cases and arrested 278 persons in total, including 61 youths. On 18 January 2025, the Force introduced Etomidate Rapid Test Kits, which enable on-duty frontline officers to conduct on-site rapid tests for suspected possession of “space oil drug”.

Since 14 February 2025, etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, and its 3 analogues have been listed as dangerous drugs upon gazettal. As at 28 February 2025, a total of 29 cases involving “space oil drug” were detected by the Force, resulting in the arrest of 39 persons, including 10 youths.

In addition to enforcement actions, the Force remains committed to the anti-drug education work. Apart from incorporating information about “space oil drug” into school talks and the “interactive anti-drugs drama”, the Force has also disseminated infographics and short videos on “space oil drug” to all schools in Hong Kong for showing to their students. Founded by the Force in 2021, the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” (L.I.O.N.) trains 100 undergraduates and secondary students annually to become anti-drug leaders. Now in its fourth cohort, L.I.O.N. continues to uphold its mission of fostering a drug-free culture.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB088

(Question Serial No. 2561)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide, in tabular form, the number of visitors to the Police Museum and the proportion of tourists among them for 2022, 2023, and 2024 respectively.
2. The Old Yau Ma Tei Police Station, a popular tourist attraction, currently has its new wing temporarily used as a works area for the Central Kowloon Route Project (the Project). In view of the Project's scheduled completion at the end of this year, will consideration be given to better utilising the Old Yau Ma Tei Police Station after the Project's completion? For example, will the police station be redeveloped into a police museum to enhance public access and further capitalise on its unique value?

Asked by: Hon YIU Pak-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1. The numbers of visitors to the Police Museum for 2022, 2023 and 2024 are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of visitors	12 947 (Note)	22 799	26 886

(Note): The Police Museum was closed for enhancement works from June 2021 to August 2022 and reopened in September 2022.

The Police Force does not maintain statistics on the proportion of tourists among visitors to the Police Museum.

2. The Old Yau Ma Tei Police Station has become a popular tourist attraction. The Government will consider and explore development plans to promote characteristic local tourism in this regard.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB089

(Question Serial No. 1489)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), will the Government advise on the following:

1. The current manpower, establishment, ranks involved, payroll costs broken down by rank, and the total payroll cost of the ADCC;
2. A breakdown, in tabular form, of the number and details of anti-scam campaigns conducted by the ADCC each year over the past 5 years, along with the associated expenditure;
3. A breakdown, in tabular form, of the number, content, and formats of promotional materials produced for anti-crime publicity initiatives targeting specific crime types, as well as the related expenditure, for each of the past 5 years;
4. The number of consultations handled via the “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222” and the number of reported cases referred by the helpline for each of the past 5 years; and
5. For each of the past 5 years, the usage statistics of the “Scameter” by the public, including the number of suspicious phone calls, websites and other sources identified by the Public Intelligence Platform in the scam database and the related expenditure, broken down by the type of information available from the “Scameter”.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) had an establishment of 84 posts, with 40 being permanent establishment and 44 on secondment from different Force formations.

Details on the posts and salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts	Police Pay Scale (PPS)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2024)
Superintendent	1	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	3	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/Inspector	10	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Station Sergeant	2	PPS 24 – 33a	52,015 – 76,830
Sergeant	17	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	51	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	84		

- 2-3. The Police Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders. Through different channels, both online and offline, the Force has conducted various anti-crime publicity and educational campaigns.

Apart from the ADCC, various formations at the headquarters, regional and district levels are involved in publicity and educational initiatives aimed not only at deterring deception but also at preventing and combating crimes. The Force does not maintain detailed statistics on crime prevention and anti-deception campaigns implemented by different formations.

In the fight against fraud, over the past year, the Force has brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through channels like ferries, minibuses, trams, major logistics company's fleet and the anti-scam promotional truck, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. To further promote the use of the self-developed "Scameter+", the Force launched the "Anti-Scam Lucky Draw" with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of last year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads. In December, the Force also held the large-scale "Anti-Scam Carnival" at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring "The Little Grape" in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January 2025, the Force organised the "Anti-Money Laundering Month" again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled "Your Life. Your Choice" together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts.

The Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, and social media like the Force's official accounts on Facebook and Xiaohongshu, the websites of the "CyberDefender" and the ADCC, as well as the mobile application "Scameter+" to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

The expenditure incurred by the ADCC, as well as that spent on publicity and educational initiatives to combat and prevent crimes (including deception cases), form

part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

4. The number of consultations handled via the “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222” for each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of consultations handled via the “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”	22 668	27 935	38 279	52 458	79 595

The “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222” only provides consultation services. If members of the public suspect that they have fallen victim to a scam, they should report it to the Police as soon as possible for assistance.

5. To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed “Scameter” in September 2022 and its mobile application “Scameter+” in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded “Scameter+” by introducing a public reporting platform and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. Between September 2022 and the end of 2024, “Scameter” and “Scameter+” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public.

With the support of private organisations, the Force launched the “Anti-Scam Lucky Draw” from October to November 2024 to further promote the use of the self-developed “Scameter+,” attracting over 1.8 million participants. Between February 2023 and the end of 2024, “Scameter+” recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads, bringing the total to 874 000.

In addition, from February to the end of 2024, “Scameter+” issued over 90 000 alerts for suspicious calls and more than 600 000 alerts for suspicious websites, while members of the public reported over 330 000 suspicious calls and more than 35 000 suspicious websites.

The expenditure incurred by “Scameter” forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB090

(Question Serial No. 1499)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding efforts to combat drug-related crimes, will the Government advise on the following:

1. The total number of drug-related crimes reported to the Police Force, the total number of cases detected, the number of arrests, the number of prosecutions, and the number of successful prosecutions for each of the past 5 years;
2. In relation to space oil, the number of prosecutions, the number of successful prosecutions, the number of cases resulting in convictions and imprisonment, the number of persons involved, the number of minors involved, the age of the youngest involved and the quantity of space oil seized for each of the past 5 years;
3. The number, format and content of activities held or publicity materials produced to prevent drug abuse and drug trafficking, the number of citizens reached, and the related expenditures for each of the past 5 years; and
4. The current number of staff, their ranks, salary expenditures by rank, and the total expenditure for salaries of the Narcotics Division under the Security Bureau.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

1. The numbers of drug-related cases (including serious and minor drug cases) detected and persons arrested by the Police Force in the past 5 years are as follows:

Drug-related offences (including serious and minor offences)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases detected	2 760	3 515	3 131	2 497	2 315
Number of persons arrested	3 587	4 303	3 775	3 060	2 818

The Force does not maintain the relevant prosecution and conviction figures.

2. Figures on “space oil drug” maintained by the Force since 2023 are detailed as follows:

Offences involving “space oil drug”	2023	2024
Number of persons arrested	8	278
Number of arrested youths aged under 21	2	61
Age of the youngest arrestee	12 years old	12 years old
Quantity seized	0.286 kg	12.4 kg and 510 ml

The Force does not maintain the relevant prosecution and conviction figures.

3. The Force is committed to combatting drug-related offences, with particular attention to youth involvement in drugs. The Force will continue to deepen collaboration with stakeholders, including enlisting the support of schools and parents to disseminate crime prevention messages. In the previous school year, the Force conducted seminars on subjects such as anti-drugs for over 5 000 teachers, with the goal to provide the relevant training to 8 000 teachers this school year. Founded by the Force in 2021, the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” (L.I.O.N.) trains 100 undergraduates and secondary students annually to become anti-drug leaders. Now in its fourth cohort, L.I.O.N. continues to uphold its mission of fostering a drug-free culture.

Additionally, the Force has been reaching out to schools and the community to spread anti-drug messages. Specifically, School Liaison Officers were arranged to host anti-drug seminars and the “interactive anti-drug drama” was staged in over 50 primary schools to convey anti-drug messages to 8 000 teachers and students. Meanwhile, the Force strives to get across the “Drugs? Never, Ever!” message to the public through the lively image of the Force’s anti-drug mascots “Mighty Cat” along with his two friends “No-No” and “Sneaky Rat”, coupled with the release of the promotional animation *Mighty Cat’s Diary*. Other anti-drug efforts include organising the “Anti-Cannabis Month”, “Anti-Drugs Campaign” and a large-scale anti-drug carnival, as well as arranging “Anti-Drugs Promotion Trucks” to tour various districts to disseminate the anti-drug message. Between 2023 and 2024, various anti-drug publicity campaigns organised by the Force had attracted over 130 000 participants.

4. Currently, the Narcotics Division (ND) under the Security Bureau is staffed with 31 civil servants (comprising 3 directorate and 28 non-directorate officers) and 4 other contract staff, with no supernumerary posts. The expenditures on staff of the ND were approximately \$31.09 million, \$32.33 million and \$29.68 million in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025) respectively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB091

(Question Serial No. 1505)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Regarding the e-Ticketing Scheme, will the Government advise on the following:

1. The current number of portable printers procured under the e-Ticketing Scheme, with a breakdown by Police Region;
2. The number of complaints received from members of the public about illegal parking in each of the past 5 years, with a breakdown by Police Region;
3. The number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued in each of the past 5 years, with a breakdown by Police Region and vehicle type, including the respective numbers and proportions of FPTs issued through traditional handwritten methods, printed on the spot, or served via electronic contact methods such as email or SMS;
4. Further to the above, the number and proportion of cases with unpaid fines, broken down by the method of FPT issuance; and
5. The current number of vehicle licences with an encrypted QR code printed on them to facilitate the Scheme, with a breakdown by vehicle type.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

1. The number of portable printers procured for the e-Ticketing Scheme since its launch, with breakdown by Police Region, is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of portable printers
Hong Kong Island	718

Police Region	Number of portable printers
Kowloon West	628
Kowloon East	526
New Territories South	734
New Territories North	498
Total	3 104

2. The numbers of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking reported by the public to the Police Force for the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Number of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking reported by the public					
Police Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	31 638	27 417	20 781	17 995	20 492
Kowloon East	53 094	46 620	31 956	27 223	26 012
Kowloon West	72 577	66 594	51 908	46 007	40 457
New Territories South	36 430	33 613	30 155	27 859	27 080
New Territories North	24 891	23 116	33 275	23 869	13 334
Total	218 630	197 360	168 075	142 953	127 375

- 3-4. The figures on handwritten and electronic FPTs for illegal parking issued by the Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) by Police Region for the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking									
	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic
Hong Kong Island	294 009	305 209	191 500	479 092	81 520	542 480	21 622	501 545	8 965	388 112
Kowloon East	317 543	172 358	195 357	375 109	28 931	526 486	3 509	439 529	794	296 785
Kowloon West	347 326	284 267	216 708	646 284	76 906	934 178	10 686	949 590	4 316	868 003
New Territories South	368 824	144 007	184 200	400 506	52 787	518 108	11 655	459 872	3 834	386 628
New Territories North	311 372	162 954	147 737	447 667	47 929	554 146	10 318	604 693	2 949	582 811
Total	1 639 074	1 068 795	935 502	2 366 658	288 073	3 075 398	57 790	2 955 229	20 858	2 522 339

The numbers of FPTs for illegal parking issued under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) by vehicle type for the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Vehicle type	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Private car	1 977 286	2 180 390	2 061 425	1 786 162	1 481 864
Goods vehicle	560 073	826 856	956 171	875 438	768 055
Taxi	54 460	73 232	82 856	83 025	74 898
Public bus (Note)	23 474	33 675	43 977	53 187	50 711
Public light bus	2 510	3 505	5 668	7 715	6 144

Vehicle type	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Motorcycle (Note)	73 776	171 633	199 734	191 817	148 184
Others (Note)	16 290	12 869	13 640	15 675	13 341
Total	2 707 869	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019	2 543 197

(Note) According to data on FPTs issued for illegal parking maintained by the Force, public buses comprise franchised and non-franchised buses, motorcycles comprise motorcycles and motor tricycles, and other vehicles comprise private buses, private light buses, special purpose vehicles and towing vehicles.

The Force is currently in the final stage of preparation for the implementation of electronic fixed penalty notices (FPNs) and the Traffic e-Enforcement System. At present, electronic FPNs have not yet been issued via e-mail or SMS. The system is expected to be rolled out by phases in 2025. Prior to the launch of electronic FPNs and the enforcement system, the Force will announce relevant arrangements and specific details to the public in due course to ensure a clear understanding of and smooth transition to the new measures.

The Force does not maintain other information and figures requested in the question.

5. To facilitate the implementation of the e-Ticketing Scheme by the Force, starting from 20 April 2020, the Transport Department has printed a system encrypted QR code on newly issued vehicle licence (VL). At present, all VLs for licensed vehicles have been printed with such QR codes. As at the end of 2024, the number of licensed vehicles by type is tabulated as follows:

Vehicle type	Number of licensed vehicles (as at the end of 2024)
Motorcycle and motor tricycle	73 494
Private car	578 001
Taxi	17 773
Franchised bus	5 870
Non-franchised bus	6 582
Private bus	837
Public light bus	4 077
Private light bus	3 354
Goods vehicle	109 885
Special purpose vehicle	1 892
Towing vehicle	9 877
Total:	811 642

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB092

(Question Serial No. 2973)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Please provide this Committee with the following information for the past 3 years:

1. A monthly breakdown of the number of illegal parking complaints lodged by members of the public across the 18 districts in Hong Kong;
2. A monthly breakdown of the number of fixed penalty tickets issued for illegal parking across the 18 districts in Hong Kong. Please include a tabulated breakdown by type of traffic contravention that led to the issuance of the tickets, such as illegal parking, double parking, illegal pick-up/drop-off of passengers, loading/unloading of goods in restricted zones and at bus stops, prolonged stopping and waiting, unauthorised entry into yellow box markings or pedestrian crossings, and causing traffic congestion; and
3. The annual number of cases in which payment was not made on time for the fixed penalty of a Fixed Penalty Notice against parking contraventions (Form 1) and a Notice Demanding Payment of Fixed Penalty (Form 2).

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

1. The Police Force categorises the figures for complaints about and fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued for illegal parking by Police Region and does not maintain these figures with a breakdown by the 18 districts. The numbers of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking reported by the public to the Police for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking reported by the public		
	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	20 781	17 995	20 492
Kowloon East	31 956	27 223	26 012
Kowloon West	51 908	46 007	40 457
New Territories South	30 155	27 859	27 080
New Territories North	33 275	23 869	13 334
Total	168 075	142 953	127 375

2. The numbers of FPTs issued for illegal parking by the Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237), with a breakdown by Police Region, for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking		
	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	624 000	523 167	397 077
Kowloon East	555 417	443 038	297 579
Kowloon West	1 011 084	960 276	872 319
New Territories South	570 895	471 527	390 462
New Territories North	602 075	615 011	585 760
Total	3 363 471	3 013 019	2 543 197

The numbers of FPTs issued by the Force for congestion-related offences under the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance (Cap. 240), categorised by Police Region and specific offence, for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Offence	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Island	Unlawfully entering box junction	689	199	359
	Unlawfully entering yellow striped light signal crossing	149	102	140
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	4 547	4 150	3 714
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	1 338	1 375	1 113
	“U” turn causing obstruction	11	21	22
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	828	1 077	971
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	1	1	0
	Sub-total	7 563	6 925	6 319

Police Region	Offence	2022	2023	2024
Kowloon East	Unlawfully entering box junction	241	493	169
	Unlawfully entering yellow striped light signal crossing	9	12	14
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	2 144	2 245	1 395
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	671	427	239
	“U” turn causing obstruction	2	3	5
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	547	437	542
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0	0
	Sub-total	3 614	3 617	2 364
Kowloon West	Unlawfully entering box junction	743	1 122	1 154
	Unlawfully entering yellow striped light signal crossing	241	313	326
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	2 134	2 214	2 105
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	353	345	251
	“U” turn causing obstruction	1	5	11
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	728	431	551
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	7	0	0
	Sub-total	4 207	4 430	4 398
New Territories South	Unlawfully entering box junction	155	373	210
	Unlawfully entering yellow striped light signal crossing	13	12	33
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	1 769	1 669	1 283
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	419	388	241
	“U” turn causing obstruction	5	8	10
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	168	385	364
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0	0
	Sub-total	2 529	2 835	2 141

Police Region	Offence	2022	2023	2024
New Territories North	Unlawfully entering box junction	197	207	243
	Unlawfully entering yellow striped light signal crossing	10	13	21
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	2 001	2 965	2 764
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	124	176	175
	“U” turn causing obstruction	6	13	13
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	312	502	670
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0	0
	Sub-total	2 650	3 876	3 886

3. Regarding cases where the payment of fixed penalty was not made on time for a Fixed Penalty Notice against parking contraventions (Form 1) and a Notice Demanding Payment of Fixed Penalty (Form 2), the figures maintained by the Force for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases where the payment of fixed penalty was not made on time for a Fixed Penalty Notice (Form 1)	847 561	779 877	686 410
Number of cases where the payment of fixed penalty was not made on time for a Notice Demanding Payment of Fixed Penalty (Form 2)	126 651	129 683	119 877

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB093

(Question Serial No. 0548)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As stated under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons will be introduced by mid-2025. Also, provision for 2025-26 is \$600,000 lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, involving a net decrease of 7 posts. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the details of the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons? Which sectors will be involved in respect of the invited persons? What are the details of the staff establishment and salary costs for handling the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons? Does the Government have a specific timetable for introducing the scheme?
2. Provision for 2025-26 is \$600,000 lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, involving a net decrease of 7 posts. What are the details of these posts, including the post titles, ranks, duties, salary costs, whether they are permanent or supernumerary posts, and the job content? In the light of the decrease in posts, how will the work of the new admission schemes be handled in a balanced manner?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

1. The Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons (the Scheme) was launched on 18 March this year. Unlike the previous practice for visitors to make their own applications, under the Scheme, relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government would actively invite nationals of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries who can make considerable contributions to Hong Kong's economic development, or who have been invited to attend important events in Hong Kong, and provide them with more convenient immigration arrangements.

Currently, frequent visitors to Hong Kong may apply for self-service immigration clearance at the control points of Hong Kong. Among the 10 ASEAN countries, visitors from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam are required to apply for visas to visit Hong Kong. Under the Scheme, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will

process the applications from invited persons through a one-stop electronic platform, and relax the application criteria for self-service immigration clearance by no longer considering the number of their previous visits to Hong Kong. As regards nationals of the 4 ASEAN countries who require a visa to visit Hong Kong, the ImmD will significantly simplify the required documents for visa applications. Basically, they only need to submit a copy of their travel document and complete an electronic application form. Invited persons can enjoy self-service immigration clearance service at the control points of Hong Kong, which will greatly enhance clearance efficiency and experience.

At present, 5 B/Ds, including the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Department of Justice, are responsible for recommending and inviting ASEAN nationals relevant to their respective policy areas to join the Scheme. As at 25 March this year, relevant B/Ds had issued over 40 invitations, involving leaders in the business and legal sectors.

The ImmD will handle the work relating to the Scheme through flexible deployment of manpower and resources. There is no separate breakdown of the staff establishment and expenditure involved.

2. In 2025-26, the ImmD will create 10 disciplined posts under Programme (1) to, among others, process applications from non-local technical professionals for entry for employment under new initiatives in 2025, as well as to implement facilitation measures in respect of visit visa applications from nationals of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Besides, the ImmD will flexibly deploy its manpower and resources, and delete 17 civilian posts under Programme (1), which are mainly responsible for general clerical duties, computer operation and system analysis, etc. In conclusion, the ImmD will have a net decrease of 7 permanent non-directorate posts under Programme (1) in 2025-26. The total annual salary costs involved, in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value, will be about \$1.21 million.

The ImmD will continue to strive to optimise the use of existing resources, deploy manpower flexibly, streamline the procedures and leverage technology to enhance work efficiency and handle various new tasks.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB094

(Question Serial No. 0556)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As stated in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26, the Government will continue to implement the complementary immigration measures on non-local pregnant visitors coming to give birth in Hong Kong. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. the details of non-local pregnant visitors coming to give birth in Hong Kong in the past 5 years by place of origin, among which the total numbers involved, the respective numbers of pregnant visitors who were intercepted, subject to secondary examination, returned to their places of origin due to their failure to meet the immigration requirements, and successfully gave birth in Hong Kong;
2. the specific details of the complementary immigration measures on non-local pregnant visitors coming to give birth in Hong Kong implemented by the Government, and the details of the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved; and
3. given that a non-local pregnant visitor was sentenced to imprisonment earlier for making false representation to Immigration staff on her pregnancy status, how will the Government strengthen the control upon entry in the future?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

- (1) In order to tie in with the implementation of the “zero quota” policy on 1 January 2013, and prevent non-local pregnant women (i.e. pregnant women who are non-Hong Kong residents, including Mainland pregnant women) who do not have prior booking for obstetric services with local hospitals from entering Hong Kong for delivery, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has strengthened the complementary immigration measures, including proactive interception at control points. The respective numbers of non-local pregnant women who were invited for secondary examination upon their entry into Hong Kong in the past 5 years are set out below.

Year	Number of non-local pregnant women intercepted	Number of non-local pregnant women invited for secondary examinations	Number of non-local pregnant women refused permission to land as they failed to meet the immigration requirements
2020	2 817	1 629	227
2021	265	256	24
2022	498	480	28
2023	20 006	12 203	1 025
2024	26 328	16 668	1 154

The statistics of non-local pregnant women coming to give birth in Hong Kong by place of origin in the past 5 years are set out below.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
(a) Mainland	2 176	1 159	997	1 251	1 875
(b) Macao	61	9	10	114	203
(c) Taiwan	10	4	2	7	2
(d) Other regions in Asia	176	192	217	251	260
(e) Africa	10	15	12	9	7
(f) Europe	14	3	2	10	11
(g) North America	31	6	7	21	23
(h) South America	4	1	0	3	3
(i) Oceania	16	3	1	12	12
(j) Other regions	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of non-local pregnant women coming to give birth in Hong Kong	2 498	1 392	1 248	1 678	2 396

The ImmD does not maintain other breakdown figures mentioned in the question.

- (2) Under the “zero quota” policy, all public and private hospitals will not accept any bookings by Mainland pregnant women whose husbands are not Hong Kong permanent residents for delivery in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, Mainland pregnant women whose husbands are Hong Kong permanent residents or Hong Kong residents who came to Hong Kong on One-way Permits may make bookings at private hospitals for delivery under special arrangements. To complement the relevant policies, the ImmD will continue to step up the complementary immigration measures on non-local pregnant women. Under the relevant policies, non-local pregnant women who are at an advanced stage of pregnancy (28 weeks or above) are required to produce to immigration officers their confirmation certificates on delivery booking issued by private hospitals when they enter Hong Kong as visitors, otherwise they may be refused entry. In implementing these measures, immigration officers are assisted by medical staff assigned by the Department of Health, who will give professional assessment and advice on the pregnancy and other physical conditions of the pregnant women concerned. As these measures are part of the regular

immigration control duties of the ImmD, there is no separate breakdown of the resources involved.

- (3) The ImmD has been carefully analysing the practices and trends of non-local pregnant women coming to give birth in Hong Kong, and will deploy officers to patrol the arrival halls from time to time to arrange targeted interception on inbound passengers through visual inspection and judgment by experience. Pursuant to the Immigration Ordinance, officers of the ImmD may examine any persons on his/her arrival in Hong Kong. The ImmD will consider whether non-Hong Kong residents meet normal immigration requirements and whether their purpose of visit is consistent with what they have declared. It will also decide whether to allow their entry after giving due consideration to the actual circumstances of each case, having regard to the laws of the HKSAR and the prevailing immigration policies.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB095

(Question Serial No. 0557)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Provision for 2025-26 is \$5.9 million (0.1%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024-25. In addition, it is stated in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Department will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, and the extension of operating hours for cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please advise on the details of the net increase of 40 posts in 2025-26, including the post titles, ranks, duties, salary costs, whether they are permanent or supernumerary posts, and the job content.
2. The Government will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. Would the Government advise on the progress of the relevant work and when the two boundary control points are expected to implement round-the-clock clearance?
3. Please advise in detail on the respective staff establishment, salary costs and average daily inbound and outbound passenger trips of the existing 13 immigration control points. In particular, what is the latest progress of the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Control Point? What are the estimated staff establishment and expenditure of the new Huanggang Port to be commissioned at the end of this year? If such information is available, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. The Immigration Department (ImmD) will have a total net increase of 46 non-directorate posts responsible for immigration control at various control points under Programme (2) in 2025-26. The total annual salary costs involved, in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value, will be about \$33.85 million, mainly to support the phased commissioning of passenger facilities for the Three-Runway System at the Hong Kong International Airport. There will also be a net deletion of 6 non-directorate posts at service

units other than control points, and the total annual salary costs involved will be about \$2.57 million.

2. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services at respective BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides. Meanwhile, the ImmD will continue to take various measures, in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control points, and seek additional resources through established mechanisms when necessary.

3. The staff establishment and salary costs of the ImmD for the 13 major control points under Programme (2) in 2025-26 are set out at Annex 1.

The average daily inbound and outbound passenger trips at the 13 major control points in 2024 are set out at Annex 2.

The engineering feasibility study for the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Control Point redevelopment project is underway and expected to complete within 2025. The scope of the study includes such matters as road infrastructure, public transportation, land requirement, area of the control point, land ownership, environmental assessment and heritage conservation near the surrounding areas of the STK Control Point. The HKSAR Government will continue to work closely with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to press ahead with the redevelopment project.

The superstructure of the new Huanggang Port is currently under construction. The target is to strive for basic completion of the new Huanggang Port building by end-2025. The arrangements and timetable for the commissioning of the port are subject to further discussions by the Shenzhen Municipal Government and the HKSAR Government. The two governments are discussing the operational details in depths regarding the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port. As visitors will only need to have their identities verified once to complete the respective clearance procedures of both sides under the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode, the detailed operation would need to be discussed and agreed by the two governments.

As regards the estimated expenditure, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has agreed in principle to bear the design and construction costs for the entire Huanggang Port redevelopment project (including the Hong Kong Port Area (HKPA)). The HKSAR Government will bear on its own the costs of other capital non-works items for the HKPA, such as furniture and equipment and information systems for the operation at the control point by various departments. As the HKPA is still at the design stage, estimate of the relevant expenditure is not yet available. The HKSAR Government will follow the established procedures to seek funding for the related items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

Staff establishment and salary costs of the ImmD for the 13 major control points

2025-26

Control Point ^{Note 1}	Number of posts ^{Note 2}	Salary costs ^{Note 3} (\$m)
Airport	1 021	578
Lo Wu	721	405
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	240	135
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	398	228
Lok Ma Chau	364	198
Man Kam To	86	45
Sha Tau Kok ^{Note 4}	40	24
Shenzhen Bay	481	259
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	488	274
Heung Yuen Wai	199	114
Macau Ferry Terminal	183	103
China Ferry Terminal	163	92
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	90	51
Total	4 474	2,506

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: The number of posts under Programme (2).

Note 3: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

Note 4: Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port. The relevant manpower has been temporarily deployed to other control points according to operational needs.

Average daily inbound and outbound passenger trips at the 13 major control points

Control Point	Average daily inbound and outbound passenger trips at the control point in 2024
Airport	114 414
Lo Wu	175 454
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	150 418
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	72 470
Lok Ma Chau	32 944
Man Kam To	4 047
Sha Tau Kok ^{Note 1}	0
Shenzhen Bay	94 204
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	77 780
Heung Yuen Wai	69 673
Macau Ferry Terminal	19 211
China Ferry Terminal	3 426
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	1 426
Total	815 467

Note 1: Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB096

(Question Serial No. 0558)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Provision of \$14.982 million under Subhead 202 Repatriation expenses is for the repatriation of illegal immigrants, immigration offenders and convicted criminals in accordance with the relevant immigration legislation. The increase of \$3.237 million (27.6%) over the revised estimate for 2024-25 is mainly due to the expected increase of repatriation expenses incurred in the removal of unsubstantiated non-refoulement claimants and the anticipated increase in air ticket fees. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The Government has expressed that it will remove illegal immigrants, overstayers, immigration offenders and undesirable persons in a reasonable and cost-effective manner. Please advise in detail on the respective numbers of such individuals, their places of origin and the repatriation expenses involved in the past 5 years.
2. What are the specific approaches and content in relation to the reasonable and cost-effective manner as mentioned by the Government. If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons? Additionally, what are the criteria in respect of an undesirable person? Who have been listed as undesirable persons in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

(1) In the past 5 years, the number of persons removed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2020	3 615
2021	3 222
2022	3 245
2023 [#]	5 369
2024 [#]	6 611
2025 (January to February)	1 251
Total	23 313

With the gradual resumption of international flight connections following the world's return to normalcy after the COVID-19 epidemic, the overall number of persons repatriated gradually rebounded.

Regarding the 23 313 persons removed by the ImmD, a breakdown by their country/region of origin is tabulated as follows:

Country/region of origin	Number of persons repatriated
China (Mainland, Macao and Taiwan)	12 175
Indonesia	2 547
India	1 478
Thailand	1 261
The Philippines	1 168
Vietnam	1 110
Pakistan	987
Bangladesh	828
Nepal	259
Sri Lanka	141
Others	1 359
Total	23 313

The ImmD's total expenditure/estimated expenditure on repatriation in each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	Total expenditure on repatriation (\$'000)
2020-21	5,416
2021-22	6,482
2022-23	9,333
2023-24	11,314
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	11,745

The aforesaid expenditure/estimated expenditure is mainly for covering the costs of air tickets and application for travel documents for removees, among others. The estimated repatriation expenses for 2025-26 is higher than the revised estimate for last year, which is mainly due to the expected increase of repatriation expenses incurred in the removal of unsubstantiated claimants and the anticipated increase in air ticket fees. When drawing up the budget, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with expenditures in handling general removal operations and related work, as well as ad-hoc operations that might involve more resources, in order to sustain removal efficiency and efforts. While stepping up efforts in executing removal operations, the ImmD has all been adopting a very prudent and pragmatic approach in deploying resources. There is, in fact, a 13% drop in the estimated repatriation expenses for 2025-26 as compared with the original estimate for 2024-25. The ImmD will closely monitor the related expenditures and continue to ensure the optimal use of all resources.

(2) When carrying out removal operations, the ImmD will send removees back to their places of origin as soon as possible, in accordance with the powers conferred by law and the relevant departmental procedures and guidelines. For removees who voluntarily agree to return to their places of origin, Immigration officers will arrange suitable transport to facilitate their prompt return. In cases involving uncooperative persons who refuse to be removed, the ImmD will deploy officers as appropriate to escort them in flight to effect forced repatriation, thereby further enhancing removal efficiency. Furthermore, to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, the Government of the Special Administrative Region has all along been maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders, including consulates and airlines, in order to arrange special flights for large-scale removal operations when necessary and as the circumstances so warrant. Since November 2022, the ImmD has deployed officers as appropriate to conduct a total of 32 removal operations with in-flight escort of unsubstantiated claimants who were highly uncooperative and put up strong resistance so as to implement forced repatriation and counter the delaying acts of unsubstantiated claimants. During the same period, the ImmD also carried out 21 large-scale removal operations, through which a total of 494 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong.

Exercising effective immigration control is one of the main functions of the ImmD. Therefore, while facilitating the movement of bona-fide visitors, the ImmD also denies the entry of undesirable persons who are likely to pose a threat to the security, prosperity and well-being of Hong Kong. To enforce effective immigration control, the ImmD maintains a watch-list to enable frontline staff to identify persons who warrant attention among the large number of passengers. The watch-list is updated from time to time as appropriate, and its details, which involve internal and operational information, are not to be disclosed.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB097

(Question Serial No. 2797)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

With regard to the anti-illegal worker enforcement operations conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD), would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the respective numbers of illegal workers (i) arrested, (ii) prosecuted and (iii) convicted, as well as the types of work they undertook in each of the past 2 years and this year to date;
- (2) the respective numbers of persons convicted of employing illegal workers, taking up unlawful employment or aiding and abetting the employment of illegal workers, as well as the sentences imposed by the court in respect of the relevant cases in each of the past 2 years and this year to date;
- (3) the respective numbers of anti-illegal worker operations conducted by the ImmD alone and those conducted jointly with other departments such as the Police in each of the past 2 years and this year to date; and
- (4) the respective numbers of reports on suspected employment of illegal workers received by the ImmD in each of the past 2 years and this year to date?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

- (1) and (2) The numbers of illegal workers arrested, prosecuted and convicted in the past 2 years and this year to date are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of illegal workers		
	Arrested	Prosecuted	Convicted
2023	1 304	943	869
2024	1 268	1 013	918
2025 (as of February)	181	174	143

Note: Persons prosecuted/convicted may not be arrested/prosecuted in the same year.

The illegal workers arrested were mainly engaged in work related to the catering, retail or cleaning industry.

The numbers of employers convicted of offences relating to the employment of illegal workers in the past 2 years and this year to date are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of employers convicted
2023	99
2024	100
2025 (as of February)	18

Note: Persons convicted may not be arrested/prosecuted in the same year.

From 2023 to end of February 2025, most of the employers convicted of offences relating to the employment of illegal workers were sentenced to imprisonment or fine, with the imprisonment periods ranging from 28 days to 19 months, and the fines ranging from HK\$1,000 to HK\$100,000.

The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

- (3) The numbers of anti-illegal worker operations (including joint operations with other departments such as the Hong Kong Police Force) conducted in the past 2 years and this year to date are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of operations
2023	17 248
2024	17 906
2025 (as of February)	2 863

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

- (4) The numbers of reports on suspected employment of illegal workers received by the ImmD in the past 2 years and this year to date are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of reports on suspected employment of illegal workers
2023	6 024
2024	8 292
2025 (as of February)	1 208

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB098

(Question Serial No. 2854)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Regarding the assessment of applications for extension of stay under various talent admission schemes, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) What were the respective numbers of applications for extension of stay that were (i) received, (ii) approved, and (iii) rejected under various talent admission schemes (namely the General Employment Policy, Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, Technology Talent Admission Scheme, Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates, Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents, and Top Talent Pass Scheme) in each of the past 3 years and this year to date? What was the average processing time per application received, and what were the reasons for rejecting the applications?
- (2) It is noted that the Immigration Department (ImmD) conducts surprise inspections from time to time when assessing an application for extension of stay, including on-site verifications against the employing company on the operating model, financial status and employee information, so as to determine the authenticity of the information provided by the applicant or his employing company. What were the manpower deployed for inspections and the numbers of inspections conducted by the ImmD respectively under various talent admission schemes in the past 3 years and this year to date? During these inspections, has any of the applicants or their employing companies been found to be providing false information? If yes, what were the details, including the number of cases, their nature, the talent admission schemes involved, and the number of prosecutions instituted by the Government in respect of these cases?
- (3) Among the prosecuted cases mentioned in item (2), what were the number of convicted cases, the talent admission schemes involved, and the average penalty imposed?
- (4) Has the ImmD received any complaints against applicants or non-compliance with the requirements of the talent admission schemes in the past 3 years and this year to date? If yes, what were the details, including the number and nature of these complaints, and how have they been followed up?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1)

The numbers of applications for extension of stay received, approved and rejected under various talent admission schemes in the past 3 years and in 2024-25 (as of February 2025) are tabulated below:

Talent admission scheme		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025)
General Employment Policy	No. of applications received	19 236	15 787	14 781	13 480
	No. of applications approved	18 819	15 876	14 688	13 221
	No. of applications rejected	191	2	4	4
Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals	No. of applications received	6 965	8 071	7 859	10 306
	No. of applications approved	6 710	7 847	7 430	9 682
	No. of applications rejected	7	1	2	0
Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates	No. of applications received	10 053	11 146	11 741	6 674
	No. of applications approved	9 639	10 673	11 239	6 209
	No. of applications rejected	26	11	27	59
Technology Talent Admission Scheme	No. of applications received	48	79	77	72
	No. of applications approved	48	77	67	67
	No. of applications rejected	0	0	1	0

Talent admission scheme		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025)
Quality Migrant Admission Scheme	No. of applications received	549	1 249	1 398	2 830
	No. of applications approved	547	1 237	1 362	2 512
	No. of applications rejected	0	0	0	1
Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents	No. of applications received	56	67	64	42
	No. of applications approved	50	62	60	41
	No. of applications rejected	0	0	0	0
Total	No. of applications received	36 907	36 399	35 920	33 404
	No. of applications approved	35 813	35 772	34 846	31 732
	No. of applications rejected	224	14	34	64

Note: Applications approved/rejected may not totally be those received in that year.

The first batch of visas issued under the Top Talent Pass Scheme has just started to expire at the end of December 2024. At present, only a small number of applications for extension of stay have been processed. There is insufficient relevant data for meaningful statistical analyses. The Government will closely monitor the data and announce the statistics in a timely manner after a sufficient number of applications for extension of stay have been accumulated and analysed.

Assessments of the applications for extension of stay submitted under various talent admission schemes will normally be completed within approximately 2 to 3 weeks after the applicants have submitted all the required information and supporting documents. The processing time may also depend on the circumstances of individual applications and the number of applications received at a particular time.

In general, the main reason for the rejection of applications for entry visas is that the applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria for extension of stay under individual admission schemes.

The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain a statistical breakdown of the main reasons for the rejection of applications.

(2) to (4)

The ImmD conducts spot checks relating to visa applications from time to time, including inspections of the workplaces in respect of the employment visa applications, to verify whether the modes of operation, work environments and numbers of employees, etc., are consistent with the information declared by the applicants or their employing companies. If any fraudulent applications are found, the ImmD will immediately follow up and investigate, and refer the case to the relevant law enforcement agencies when necessary. In the past 3 years and in 2024-25 (as of February 2025), the ImmD conducted a total of 3 121 inspections in this regard. The current staff establishment for handling visa application-related inspections is 18 posts. The ImmD will continue to monitor the situation and flexibly deploy manpower according to actual needs.

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other figures mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB099

(Question Serial No. 1536)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned in the Estimates of Expenditure, the number of non-directorate posts in the Immigration Department (ImmD) will be reduced to 8 791 by 31 March 2026, representing a decrease of 26 posts and 88 posts respectively when compared with the same period in 2025 (8 817 posts) and 2024 (8 879 posts), would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the actual establishment, strength (and the percentage of actual establishment it accounted for), number of vacancies and vacancy rate, as well as wastage (including natural wastage and unnatural wastage) and wastage rate of the ImmD in 2023-24 and 2024-25 respectively, broken down by post and rank (including disciplined services staff and civilian staff)?
2. As mentioned under various programmes, the ImmD will undertake a number of new tasks and initiatives, such as to “prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours”, “prepare for the extension of operating hours for cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours”, “carry out planning of immigration facilities at new control points or control points under redevelopment”, and to follow up on various talent admission policies. Has the Government assessed the impact of the continued reduction of non-directorate staff on the operation of the Department? If yes, what are the details and ways of addressing it?
3. How will the ImmD make good use of technology to enhance its operational efficiency and optimise the use of resources?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. In 2023-24 and 2024-25, the staff establishment, strength of staff, vacancy situation and wastage situation of the Immigration Department (ImmD) are as follows:

2023-24

Grade		Staff establishment	Strength of staff (percentage)	No. of vacancies ^{Note 1} (vacancy rate ^{Note 2})	Natural wastage (wastage rate ^{Note 3})	Unnatural wastage (wastage rate ^{Note 3})
Non-directorate disciplined services staff	Officer	2 306	2 228 (96.6%)	78 (3.4%)	25 (1.2%)	42 (2.0%)
	Rank and File	4 892	4 699 (96.1%)	193 (3.9%)	103 (2.2%)	121 (2.6%)
Non-directorate civilian staff		1 572	1 475 (93.8%)	97 (6.2%)	71 (4.8%)	36 (2.4%)

Note 1: Number of vacancies (as at 31 March of the year) = staff establishment – strength of staff.

Note 2: Vacancy rate (as at 31 March of the year) = number of vacancies / staff establishment.

Note 3: Wastage rate (as at 31 March of the year) = wastage figure / strength of staff as at 1 April of the year.

2024-25

Grade		Staff establishment	Strength of staff (percentage)	No. of vacancies ^{Note 1} (vacancy rate ^{Note 2})	Natural wastage (wastage rate ^{Note 3})	Unnatural wastage (wastage rate ^{Note 3})
Non-directorate disciplined services staff	Officer	2 350	2 268 (96.5%)	82 (3.5%)	12 (0.5%)	29 (1.3%)
	Rank and File	4 851	4 663 (96.1%)	188 (3.9%)	83 (1.8%)	85 (1.8%)
Non-directorate civilian staff		1 570	1 396 (88.9%)	174 (11.1%)	66 (4.7%)	25 (1.8%)

Note 1: Number of vacancies (as at 28 February of the year) = staff establishment – strength of staff.

Note 2: Vacancy rate (as at 28 February of the year) = number of vacancies / staff establishment.

Note 3: Wastage rate (as at 28 February of the year) = wastage figure / strength of staff as at 1 April of the year.

2. The ImmD will take different measures to enhance work efficiency having regard to the actual situation and operational needs, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc.. It will also seek additional resources through established mechanisms when necessary to ensure that the Department's future development needs could be effectively met. Generally speaking, the ImmD's operation will not be affected by the adjustments to its establishment.

3. The ImmD will continue to strive to apply innovative technology in different work areas to enhance operational efficiency and service standards, thereby providing more convenient, professional and quality services to the public. The major initiatives for the coming year include:

- (a) Extension of applicable age of e-Channel service: At present, Hong Kong residents aged 11 or above holding a smart identity card can use e-Channels for self-service immigration clearance. To enhance the clearance efficiency of control points, the ImmD plans to adjust the applicable age of the e-Channel service in the first quarter of this year, so that children aged 7 or above holding a valid Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Passport and a Hong Kong permanent identity card can undergo self-service immigration clearance with a smart identity card using facial recognition technology at e-Channels.
- (b) Introduction of new e-Channel: The new e-Channel at the Arrival Hall of the Hong Kong International Airport is anticipated to be introduced in the third quarter of this year, enabling eligible Hong Kong residents to experience hassle-free self-service immigration clearance through verification of identity by facial recognition technology at the new e-Channel upon arrival, without prior enrolment or presenting travel documents or QR codes.
- (c) Commencement of study on the Fourth Information Systems Strategy (ISS-4): To proactively seize the new opportunities brought by innovative technology and artificial intelligence technology, the ImmD appointed a consultant in August 2024 to conduct study on the ISS-4, so as to comprehensively review and assess the existing information system policies and infrastructure to formulate a blueprint for the Department's long-term information technology development.
- (d) Implementation of efficient, innovative and convenient clearance modes: In planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the HKSAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance modes, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCP projects, to enhance passenger clearance efficiency.

The ImmD will continue to leverage innovative technology to provide passengers with services of enhanced convenience, efficiency and quality.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB100

(Question Serial No. 2708)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

On streamlining the arrangements for immigration clearance at sea, please advise on the following:

- a. What is the average time required for and the administrative cost of immigration clearance of vessels (including fishing vessels and pleasure vessels, etc.) in the past 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25)?
- b. Regarding the facilitation of immigration clearance arrangements for vessels and the promotion of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao individual travel scheme for yachts, has the Government allocated resources to conduct a feasibility study on new clearance modes (such as “co-location” arrangement) and what is the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

a and b. All vessels (including fishing vessels and visiting pleasure vessels) are required to present for immigration clearance upon arrival in and prior to departure from Hong Kong waters. Masters of the vessels have to anchor as required their vessels (except cross-boundary ferries and cruises for which designated piers for anchorage are available) at a designated approved immigration anchorage, namely the “Eastern Immigration Anchorage”, the “Western Immigration Anchorage” or the “Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage”, and hoist the prescribed immigration examination signal in accordance with the law whilst awaiting the immigration examination.

To streamline and facilitate the immigration procedures for pleasure vessels, the master of a visiting pleasure vessel is currently not required to anchor the vessel at an approved immigration anchorage mentioned above for immigration examination, provided that he or his representative proceeds, within 24 hours after the arrival of the vessel in and before the intended departure from the Hong Kong waters, to the Harbour Control Section of the Immigration Department (ImmD) located in Central (operating round the clock) for immigration examination. To tie in with the promotion of yacht tourism by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, the ImmD will continue to review the measures

of immigration procedures for vessels in a timely manner and endeavour to provide more convenient, efficient and quality services to visitors.

As immigration clearance conducted for persons on fishing vessels and pleasure vessels is part of the routine immigration control duties of the ImmD, a separate breakdown of the expenditure involved is not available.

The ImmD does not maintain the statistics on the average time required for immigration clearance of vessels.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB101

(Question Serial No. 2713)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under the Mainland Fisherman Deckhand Scheme, employers are required to submit the particulars of Mainland fisherman deckhands for the issue of entry permits. It is learnt that submissions may be made via email and the “iAM Smart” mobile application, etc. In this connection, please advise on the following:

(a) What is the processing time for the aforesaid electronic submissions and what are the benefits? What is the proportion of such submissions as compared with conventional application forms?

(b) For the operation of the electronic submission system, what are the expenditure on the equipment involved, the manpower deployment required and the arrangement for system maintenance?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

(a) and (b). At present, registered fishing vessel owners may submit the declaration forms and lists containing the prescribed particulars of the arrival/departure crew to the Immigration Department (ImmD) for immigration clearance of their fishing vessels carrying Mainland fishermen deckhands to Hong Kong by encrypted email with electronic certificate (“Immigration Clearance of Dually-registered Fishing Vessels by Electronic Means”). This electronic service aims to facilitate immigration clearance for the industry, in which vessel owners/masters/authorised persons are not required to visit the offices of the ImmD in person to complete the procedures, provided that all necessary documents are duly submitted. The usage rates of the “Immigration Clearance of Dually-registered Fishing Vessels by Electronic Means” were about 7% in 2022-23, 39% in 2023-24 and 55% in 2024-25 (as of February) respectively.

The provision of the “Immigration Clearance of Dually-registered Fishing Vessels by Electronic Means” for fishing vessels carrying Mainland fishermen deckhands to Hong Kong is part of the regular duties of the ImmD. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved, which is part of the overall operation of the relevant system.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB102

(Question Serial No. 1609)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

At present, full-time non-local postgraduate and undergraduate students can take up part-time jobs in Hong Kong. Please set out the number of non-local students currently taking up part-time jobs in Hong Kong, by level of programme and month, since the temporary exemption of the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs for non-local students.

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy (LegCo internal reference no.: 45)

Reply:

Starting from 1 November 2023, the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs for non-local students studying in full-time locally-accredited local programmes at the postgraduate level (non-local postgraduate students) have been temporarily exempted. With a "No Objection Letter" issued by the Immigration Department (ImmD), non-local postgraduate students are allowed to take up part-time employment. No restrictions are imposed on the number of hours or the location of the part-time work.

The temporary exemption of the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs has also been extended to non-local students studying in full-time locally-accredited local programmes at the undergraduate level (non-local undergraduate students) since 1 November 2024.

With effect from 1 November 2023, the numbers of "No Objection Letters" issued by the ImmD for the aforesaid arrangement are as follows:

Student category	Number of “No Objection Letters” issued		
	2023	2024	2025 (as of February)
Non-local postgraduate students #	51 161	54 987	1 157
Non-local undergraduate students ^	Not applicable	24 037	151
Total	51 161	79 024	1 308

The restrictions on taking up part-time jobs for non-local postgraduate students have been temporarily exempted since 1 November 2023.

^ The restrictions on taking up part-time jobs for non-local undergraduate students have been temporarily exempted since 1 November 2024.

The ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB103

(Question Serial No. 3164)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) under the Immigration Department (ImmD) is tasked with duties including rendering assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and their family members. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD and the number of assistance seekers concerned in the past year by nature of the cases;
2. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD in the past year by region of the assistance seekers;
3. the specific assistance rendered to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong in the past year; and
4. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of the AHU in 2025-26?

Asked by: Hon IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

In the past year, the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of 3 302 requests for assistance, involving 3 302 persons. A breakdown of the numbers of requests for assistance by nature of the cases and by region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance is tabulated as follows:

Nature of the case	2024
Loss of Travel Document	1 948
Traffic Accident	73
Hospitalisation, Illness and Death	720
Others (such as missing, being detained, etc.)	561
Total	3 302

Region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance (top 10)	2024
Mainland China	685
Japan	583
United Kingdom	355
Thailand	231
Korea	177
Italy	150
Australia	147
Spain	128
U.S.A.	88
Canada	74
Others	684
Total	3 302

Upon receipt of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents or their families, the AHU will seek to understand the situation through various channels including the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions, offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland and overseas or relevant government departments, and provide practicable assistance to the subjects having regard to the actual circumstances of the cases and their requests.

The staff establishment and total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary) of the AHU in the financial year of 2025-26 are as follows:

Year	Staff establishment	Total annual salary costs in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary
2025-26	29	\$20.88 million

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB104

(Question Serial No. 1243)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding Subhead 202 Repatriation expenses, the estimated provision of \$14.982 million for 2025-26 is for the repatriation of illegal immigrants, immigration offenders and convicted criminals in accordance with the relevant immigration legislation. The increase of \$3.237 million (27.6%) over the revised estimate for 2024-25 is mainly due to the expected increase of repatriation expenses incurred in the removal of unsubstantiated non-refoulement claimants and the anticipated increase in air ticket fees as mentioned in the document. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The actual number of persons repatriated in 2024 was 6 611, whereas the estimated number of persons to be repatriated in 2025 is 6 620. Why is there a need to increase the estimated expenditure by \$3.237 million (27.6%) only for a slight difference?
2. Has the Government studied or explored any other methods or ways to facilitate the removal of these unsubstantiated claimants, such as seeking assistance from the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, or the Chinese diplomatic and consular missions around the world, with a view to reducing the growing repatriation expenses?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

(1) The Government has been adopting various measures to continuously enhance the efficiency in handling removal cases on all fronts. For non-refoulement claims handled under the Unified Screening Mechanism, the Immigration Department (ImmD) is expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong at full steam to meet the policy objectives and serve the public interest. Since the implementation of the updated removal policy in December 2022 until February 2025, the ImmD has removed a total of 4 468 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, including 328 persons who were removed under the updated policy. The overall number of persons repatriated in 2024 increased by around 23% when compared to that in 2023.

The estimated repatriation expenses for 2025-26 is higher than the revised estimate for last year, which is mainly due to the expected increase of repatriation expenses incurred in the removal of unsubstantiated claimants and the anticipated increase in air ticket fees. When drawing up the budget, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with expenditures in handling general removal operations and related work, as well as ad hoc operations that might involve more resources, in order to sustain removal efficiency and efforts. While stepping up efforts in executing removal operations, the ImmD has been adopting a very prudent and pragmatic approach in deploying resources. There is, in fact, a 13% drop in the estimated repatriation expenses for 2025-26 as compared with the original estimate for 2024-25. The ImmD will closely monitor the related expenditures and continue to ensure the optimal use of all resources.

(2) The Government has all along spared no efforts in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated non-refoulement claimants from Hong Kong in accordance with the law. The ImmD has kept close liaison with the consulates of the main source countries of non-refoulement claimants in Hong Kong so that the necessary travel documents for unsubstantiated claimants to return to their countries of origin can be obtained as soon as possible in order to arrange removal. Where the unsubstantiated claimants are uncooperative or even put up strong resistance warranting forced repatriation, the ImmD will maintain communication with the relevant consulates to facilitate completion of all formalities for processing the travel documents for the claimants to return to their countries of origin. In addition, the Government has all along been maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders including consulates and airlines in such aspects as arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations when necessary and as the circumstances so warrant, in order to boost the efficiency in removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. Since November 2022, the ImmD has deployed officers to conduct a total of 32 removal operations with in-flight escort of unsubstantiated claimants who were highly uncooperative and put up strong resistance so as to implement forced repatriation and counter the delaying acts of unsubstantiated claimants. For those countries without direct flights to/from Hong Kong, the ImmD will seek support from the Exit and Entry Administration of the Ministry of Public Security for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants by connecting flights via airports in the Mainland. The ImmD will maintain close liaison with the relevant authorities throughout the removal processes to ensure the operations are carried out smoothly at airports from departure, transit through to arrival. Apart from forced repatriation with in-flight escorts, the ImmD also carried out 21 large-scale removal operations over the same period, through which a total of 494 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong. The ImmD will continue to endeavour to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong in accordance with the law.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB105

(Question Serial No. 0622)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (the Pilot Scheme) has been regularised since June last year with the scope expanded to cover more authorised organisations and specified activities, and renamed as the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (the Scheme). In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

- (1) of the respective numbers of non-local talent benefited from the Pilot Scheme/the Scheme in each of the past 3 years by sector;
- (2) of the respective numbers of non-local talent benefited from the Pilot Scheme/the Scheme in each of the past 3 years by country;
- (3) of the respective numbers of invitation letters issued to relevant non-local talent in their sectors by organisations authorised by government bureaux/departments in each of the past 3 years by bureau/department; and
- (4) whether any evaluation has been made on the economic benefits brought by talent coming to Hong Kong under the Pilot Scheme/the Scheme? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

The Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) on 1 June 2022, and regularised the Pilot Scheme with effect from 1 June 2024. Upon regularisation, the scheme has been named the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (STV Scheme). Organisations authorised by the relevant government bureaux or departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors without the need to apply for employment visas or entry permits from the Immigration Department (ImmD).

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

(1) to (3)

In the past 3 years, the Pilot Scheme/STV Scheme benefited a total of 30 158 non-local talent, facilitating their entry into Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities. The statistics of the beneficiaries by sector and place of origin are tabulated below:

Sector	Number of non-local talent who came to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities (From 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024) (Note 1)		
	2022	2023	2024
Medical and Healthcare	7	538	625
Higher Education	40	2 641	3 624
Arts and Culture	124	855	1 286
Sports	689	7 691	10 433
Heritage	16	43	129
Creative Industries	0	0	8
Innovation and Technology	10	121	124
Hong Kong Laureate Forum	0	122	0
Aviation	0	0	0
International/Mega Events	9	307	683
Finance (Note 2)	Not applicable	2	8
Development and Construction (Note 2)		3	20
Total	895	12 323	16 940

Note 1: The statistics are compiled on a quarterly basis, thus the statistics for the first quarter of 2025 are not yet available.

Note 2: New sectors after the expansion of the Pilot Scheme on 1 February 2023.

Place of origin	Number of non-local talent who came to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities (From 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024) (Note 1)		
	2022	2023	2024
Mainland China	50	3 377	4 555
U.S.A.	52	916	1 365
United Kingdom	134	583	863

Place of origin	Number of non-local talent who came to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities (From 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024) (Note 1)		
	2022	2023	2024
Japan	39	557	827
Taiwan, China	17	534	785
Australia	33	406	585
Korea	16	438	516
Spain	27	149	483
Thailand	10	363	451
Malaysia	16	363	439
Others	501	4 637	6 071
Total	895	12 323	16 940

Note 1: The statistics are compiled on a quarterly basis, thus the statistics for the first quarter of 2025 are not yet available.

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

(4)

As a knowledge-based economy, talent has always been one of the cornerstones of Hong Kong's success. To meet our development needs, in addition to devoting substantial resources to education to nurture local talent, the Government has also endeavoured to attract talent from around the world (including those who come to Hong Kong to participate in short-term activities as visitors), with a view to complementing our progressive evolution to a high value-added and diversified economy, as well as enhancing our global competitiveness.

The STV Scheme allows eligible non-local talent to come to Hong Kong as visitors to participate in specified short-term activities in areas such as business, scientific research, culture, academic exchange and sports. Through the abovementioned facilitation measures, the scheme helps bring non-local talent to Hong Kong for exchange, thereby raising Hong Kong's international profile and giving full play to our strength as a place to "connect and excel" under "One Country, Two Systems". The Government will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the STV Scheme, with a view to ensuring that it can achieve the policy objectives in an effective and sustainable manner.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB106

(Question Serial No. 0320)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns the policy purview coordinated by the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Paragraph 249 of the Budget Speech stated that an application fee of \$600 will be charged under various talent and capital investor admission schemes. The visa fees, to be charged based on the duration of limit of stay, will be raised to \$600 or \$1,300. It is estimated that government revenue will increase by about \$620 million per annum. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

(1) the specific justifications for adjusting the application fees?

Asked by: Hon LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 33)

Reply:

(1) Various talent and capital investor admission schemes have been well-received since their introduction or enhancement. Taking talent admission schemes as an example, the number of applications 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% compared with that of 2022. Processing such applications involve substantial administrative resources. With reference to the fees charged for similar applications in overseas jurisdictions, the Government has decided to introduce a universal application fee and increase the visa/entry permit issuance fees for applications under various talent and capital investor admission schemes so as to recover as far as possible the administrative costs incurred in processing the applications.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB107

(Question Serial No. 1380)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under this programme, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) What are the preparatory work, staff establishment and expenditures involved in the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, as well as the extension of the operating hours for cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hour? What is the estimated earliest time for implementation?
- 2) At which new control points or control points under redevelopment is the Government carrying out planning of immigration facilities? What are the staff establishment and expenditures involved?
- 3) The Shenzhen Municipal Government is planning to develop a number of new boundary control points (BCPs), including a dedicated one in the Loop and one in Qianhai. Has the Government been involved? If yes, what are the staff establishment and expenditures involved? If it is not involved at this stage, will the Government promptly discuss with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to jointly take forward the development of new BCPs and the redevelopment of other BCPs?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services at respective BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

(2) The HKSAR Government is working with the Mainland to plan for the redevelopment of Huanggang/Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Sha Tau Kok Control Point.

Regarding the redevelopment of Huanggang Port, the superstructure of the new Huanggang Port building is currently under construction. The target is to strive for basic completion of the new Huanggang Port building by end-2025. The Shenzhen Municipal Government and the HKSAR Government are discussing the operational details regarding the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port.

Regarding the redevelopment of Sha Tau Kok Control Point, the engineering feasibility study for the redevelopment project is underway and expected to complete within 2025. According to the revised estimate of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the expenditure of the engineering feasibility study is about \$6 million.

On the other hand, the staff establishment and expenditure involved in the future operation of the said BCPs are still under estimation. The HKSAR Government will follow established procedures to seek funding for the expenditure relating to the above items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

(3) As regards other plans to develop new BCPs, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will fully cooperate with the relevant policy bureaux to take forward the development. As the work at the planning stage is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, the manpower and expenditure involved have been subsumed under the overall expenditure of the Department. Resources required for the future operation of respective new BCPs will be sought in a timely manner in accordance with established mechanisms and procedures.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB108

(Question Serial No. 1386)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this programme, the estimated number of passengers/vehicles/vessels to be examined in 2025 is 336.35 million, representing an increase of approximately 6.3% over 2024. There will also be a net increase of 40 posts under this programme in 2025-26. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

- 1) of the numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points in Hong Kong, as well as the highest daily figures for passenger traffic recorded and the corresponding dates in the past 2 years;
- 2) of the estimated numbers of passengers/vehicles/vessels to be examined at various control points in 2025;
- 3) of the details of the net increase of 40 posts, including their i) sections/units, ii) grades, iii) duties and iv) remuneration expenditures; and
- 4) given that the Government was able to maintain efficient immigration clearance despite a net decrease of 173 posts under this programme in 2024-25, its justifications for the net increase of 40 posts in 2025-26.

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

1) The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points, as well as the highest daily figures for inbound and outbound passenger trips recorded in the past 2 years are tabulated as follows:

Control Point <small>Notes 1 & 2</small>	2023	2024	Highest daily figure for inbound and outbound passenger trips in 2023 and 2024	
			Date	Inbound and outbound passenger trips
Airport	31 716 381	41 875 574	21 December 2024	156 127
Lo Wu	45 334 772	64 216 170	11 October 2024	270 034

Control Point ^{Notes 1 & 2}	2023	2024	Highest daily figure for inbound and outbound passenger trips in 2023 and 2024	
			Date	Inbound and outbound passenger trips
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	40 845 069	55 052 912	11 October 2024	238 765
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	19 653 992	26 523 953	21 December 2024	127 431
Lok Ma Chau	8 397 262	12 057 437	1 January 2024	63 061
Man Kam To	1 029 876	1 481 167	2 October 2024	6 157
Shenzhen Bay	22 685 338	34 478 743	25 August 2024	153 787
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	21 570 170	28 467 661	13 February 2024	171 419
Heung Yuen Wai	12 450 061	25 500 338	25 August 2024	104 612
Harbour Control	37 464	36 969	30 October 2024	459
Macau Ferry Terminal	6 465 246	7 031 318	13 February 2024	34 498
China Ferry Terminal	1 089 083	1 253 746	13 February 2024	11 227
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal ^{Note 3}	479 367	521 748	15 December 2024	13 703
Total	211 754 081	298 497 736	25 August 2024	1 212 846

Note 1:

The following control points had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- China Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Macau Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (services suspended from 5 February 2020; passenger clearance service resumed for Hong Kong residents between 30 July 2021 and 6 January 2022 for operating the “cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries; international cruise service resumed on 8 March 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)

Note 2: The River Trade Terminal Control Point mainly provides immigration clearance services for persons on Mainland river and coastal trade vessels at the Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage. The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain the daily inbound and outbound passenger trips at the River Trade Terminal. The Hung Hom Control Point suspended its services from 30 January 2020 onwards upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services, and has formally ceased to operate since 31 July 2024. Passenger and cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 and March 2022 respectively to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 3: The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips include trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, the Ocean Terminal and other anchorages.

2) The estimated numbers of passengers, vehicles and vessels to be examined at various control points in 2025 are tabulated as follows:

Control Point ^{Note 1}	Number of passengers examined ^{Note 2} (Estimate)	Number of vehicles examined (Estimate)	Number of vessels examined (Estimate)	
Airport	49 006 000	20 300 ^{Note 3}	Not applicable	
Lo Wu	67 433 000	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	57 809 000	Not applicable		
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	28 230 000	Not applicable		
Lok Ma Chau	12 662 000	4 430 000		
Man Kam To	1 555 000	912 000		
Shenzhen Bay	36 205 000	5 184 000		
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	29 898 000	4 501 000		
Heung Yuen Wai	26 777 000	1 190 000		
Harbour Control	1 441 000	Not applicable		140 500
Macau Ferry Terminal	6 892 000			Not applicable ^{Note 4}
China Ferry Terminal	1 229 000		Not applicable ^{Note 4}	
River Trade Terminal	45 000		7 200	
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal ^{Note 5}	775 000		300	
Total ^{Note 6}	319 957 000	16 237 300	148 000	

Note 1: The River Trade Terminal Control Point mainly provides immigration clearance services for persons on Mainland river and coastal trade vessels at the Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage. The Hung Hom Control Point suspended its services from 30 January 2020 onwards upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services, and has formally ceased to operate since 31 July 2024. Passenger and cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 and March 2022 respectively to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 2: The figures include passengers, seamen, crew members passing through various control points and visitors/seamen refused entry.

Note 3: The SkyPier Terminal at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has provided transfer coach service for transfer passengers since 30 August 2023.

Note 4: The ImmD provides immigration clearance services for passengers at the arrival and departure halls of the Macau Ferry Terminal and the China Ferry Terminal. Immigration officers generally do not need to board the vessels to provide the services. As such, estimation on the number of vessels examined is not available.

Note 5: The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips include trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, the Ocean Terminal and other anchorages.

Note 6: There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

3) and 4) To meet the operational needs, the ImmD will have a total net increase of 46 non-directorate posts responsible for immigration control at control points under Programme (2) in 2025-26. The total annual salary costs involved, in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value, will be about \$33.85 million, mainly in support of the operation during the phased commissioning of passenger facilities for the Three-Runway System at the HKIA. There will also be a total net deletion of 6 non-directorate posts at service units other than control points, and the total annual salary costs involved will be about \$2.57 million. As a result, there will be a total net increase of 40 posts under Programme (2).

The ImmD will regularly review its staff establishment having regard to the operational needs, and increase or reduce its establishment as appropriate to meet the service demands.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB109

(Question Serial No. 2136)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Government has indicated that it is preparing for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) Based on the Government's assessment, will the implementation of round-the-clock clearance require additional infrastructure investment to, for instance, set up more clearance counters, self-service clearance facilities or surveillance systems? Will there be additional expenditure on security for stepping up enforcement patrols, among others?
- (b) What is the staff establishment for implementing round-the-clock clearance at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point? Is it necessary to increase the establishment for this purpose, or will the Government meet the manpower requirement for round-the-clock clearance by filling vacancies in the current establishment or redeploying existing staff (including redeployment from other boundary control points)?
- (c) Has the Government conducted relevant flow assessments or simulations to confirm the feasibility of round-the-clock operation with reference to past statistics on clearance at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and other boundary control points, including the peak periods and the average daily passenger and vehicular throughputs?

Asked by: Hon NG Chau-pei, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

As the Shenzhen Bay Control Point is designed and constructed to meet the demand for round-the-clock clearance services, no additional expenditure on infrastructure will be involved. The operating hours of cargo clearance services of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point have been extended to 24 hours since 10 December 2020.

To tie in with the implementation of round-the-clock passenger clearance services, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will continue to take various measures, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point and ensure its smooth operation. The ImmD will seek additional resources through established mechanisms, in the light of the actual situation, when necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB110

(Question Serial No. 0979)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control, (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) is responsible for processing applications for entry into Hong Kong for employment, investment, training, residence and study in accordance with prevailing policies and procedures. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the numbers of applications for employment visas for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) received and approved in the past 3 years? Please provide a breakdown by type of work and nationality.
2. In each of the past 3 years (i.e. 2022, 2023 and 2024), what was the number of cases of premature termination of employment contracts between employers and FDHs? Please provide a breakdown of the statistics in detail by reason for termination (such as those due to the employer and the FDH, mutual agreement, etc.). Besides, what was the number of FDHs who did not leave Hong Kong upon expiry of their limit of stay each year, in breach of the requirement of “remaining in Hong Kong for not more than 2 weeks after contract termination” (i.e. the so-called “two-week rule”)? What follow-up actions were taken or what penalties were imposed by the ImmD?
3. It is understood that FDHs would not necessarily be required to return to their places of origin immediately after leaving employment or expiry of contracts and have the right to remain in Hong Kong for not more than 14 days as visitors (i.e. the “two-week rule”). Upon expiry of the 14-day limit of stay, FDHs may submit applications for extension of stay (e.g. in the form of visit visa) to the ImmD subject to approval granted at the discretion of the ImmD. Please provide a breakdown of the statistics in detail on the applications for extension of stay from FDHs in each of the past 3 years (i.e. 2022, 2023 and 2024), including the total number of applications, the numbers of applications approved and not approved, and the reasons for or types of applications; and
4. The ImmD set up a special duties team in June 2013, which is responsible for the investigation of suspected cases referred upon assessing FDH visa applications. Please provide the number of cases handled by the special duties team in each of the past 3 years (i.e.

2022, 2023 and 2024) and explain the respective results (such as investigation findings, types of breaches found, actions taken, etc.).

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. The statistics on the applications for entry visas from foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 years with a breakdown by the applicants' nationality are tabulated as follows:

Region	2022		2023		2024	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
The Philippines	41 219	36 454	47 405	45 880	45 415	41 930
Indonesia	30 659	27 963	37 375	37 011	39 116	37 003
India	1 990	1 540	2 307	2 118	2 102	1 853
Thailand	494	403	477	506	489	445
Sri Lanka	366	274	414	384	392	325
Bangladesh	223	181	237	230	295	239
Pakistan	136	51	179	55	215	77
Others	150	117	152	77	136	63
Total	75 237	66 983	88 546	86 261	88 160	81 935

Note: Applications approved in a year may not totally be those received in the same year.

2. The ImmD has been following established procedures in investigating cases of overstaying of FDHs, including gathering intelligence from different channels and conducting proactive follow-ups and investigation. The numbers of FDHs arrested for overstaying in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of FDHs arrested for overstaying	981	977	1 042

An FDH who has overstayed is in breach of his/her condition of stay. According to the Immigration Ordinance, offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for 2 years. If an FDH has any adverse records or breaches, the records will be one of the factors to be taken into account when processing any future applications made by him/her for an employment visa or extension of stay. Apart from prosecuting FDHs who

have overstayed and contravened the conditions of stay, the ImmD will also carry out enforcement operations against intermediaries or agents which aid and abet them. In addition, the ImmD will continue to enhance publicity to remind the public that hiring illegal workers is a criminal offence and that employers must inspect documents of job-seekers before hiring them, and to encourage the public to report suspected cases of illegal employment.

3. In accordance with the prevailing FDH policy, an FDH shall leave Hong Kong upon completion of employment contract or within two weeks from the date of contract termination, whichever is the earlier. FDHs will only be allowed to extend their stay in Hong Kong as visitors in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances include where an FDH has to attend a tribunal hearing because of labour or monetary disputes, or where an FDH has to stay in Hong Kong to assist in criminal investigations, etc.

The numbers of applications for extension of stay in Hong Kong as visitors from FDHs upon expiry or early termination of contract in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of applications received	7 673	5 506	7 625
Number of applications approved	4 710	3 898	6 153
Number of applications rejected	2 690	1 445	1 235

Note 1: Applications processed in a year may not totally be those received in the same year.

Note 2: The figures only reflect the number of applications but not the actual number of applicants. An applicant may apply for extension of stay more than once.

4. The numbers of cases of FDH visa applications referred to the special duties team, the numbers of applications rejected, and the numbers of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of referral cases	2 671	1 557	1 183
Number of applications rejected	1 760	502	266
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed	160	132	104

Note: Cases processed in a year may not totally be those referred in the same year.

In vetting the referral cases, case officers will holistically consider a host of factors, such as the conduct of the FDHs, records of the FDHs and their former employers, and the reasons for premature termination of the employment contract. To understand such reasons, case officers will also contact the former employers and the applicants as necessary based on individual case circumstances. In respect of FDHs suspected of job-hopping, the ImmD will decisively reject their visa applications and ask them to leave Hong Kong. The ImmD will also retain their application records and take them into account when vetting future applications from the FDHs concerned for employment visas or extension of stay.

The ImmD does not maintain other statistics mentioned in questions (1) to (4).

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB111

(Question Serial No. 0523)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. Would the Government advise on the detailed arrangements and implementation timetables for the related work, as well as the staff establishment and estimated expenditures of the relevant control points?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger and cargo clearance services at respective BCPs as and when necessary.

Meanwhile, the Immigration Department will continue to take various measures, in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control points, and seek additional resources through established mechanisms when necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB112****(Question Serial No. 1875)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Control after EntryControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

The Immigration Department is responsible for arresting overstayers, illegal immigrants, illegal workers and other immigration offenders. Would the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the respective numbers of illegal workers arrested (with a breakdown by type of work) and prosecuted, as well as the penalties imposed on them in each of the past 3 years;
2. of the respective numbers of relevant employers arrested (with a breakdown by trade) and prosecuted, as well as the penalties imposed on them in each of the past 3 years;
3. of the manpower and resources allocated for combating illegal workers in each of the past 3 years; and
4. whether ways have been explored to further step up efforts in combating illegal employment, including cooperation with the Mainland authorities for increasing penalties and deterring offenders. If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

1. and 2. According to the records of the Immigration Department (ImmD), the numbers of illegal workers and employers of illegal workers arrested and prosecuted in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of illegal workers arrested	Number of illegal workers prosecuted	Number of employers of illegal workers arrested	Number of employers of illegal workers prosecuted
2022	886	539	448	138
2023	1 304	943	502	109
2024	1 268	1 013	513	169
2025 (as of February)	181	174	97	29

Note: Persons prosecuted may not be arrested in the same year.

The illegal workers arrested were mainly engaged in work related to the catering, retail or cleaning industry.

From 2022 to end of February 2025, most of the illegal workers and employers of illegal workers who had been convicted were sentenced to imprisonment or fine. In terms of imprisonment period, illegal workers were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 14 days to 23 months, whereas employers of illegal workers were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 28 days to 19 months. In terms of fines, illegal workers were fined ranging from HK\$1,000 to HK\$2,000, whereas employers of illegal workers were fined ranging from HK\$1,000 to HK\$100,000.

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

3. As the investigation of immigration offences is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, there is no breakdown of the manpower and expenditure involved as mentioned in the question.
4. The ImmD has all along been committed to combating illegal employment, with a view to protecting job opportunities for the local workforce. In respect of cooperation with the Mainland authorities, the ImmD conducts cross-boundary operations jointly with the Mainland enforcement authorities from time to time to curb illegal employment. In 2024, under the coordination of the Exit and Entry Administration of the Ministry of Public Security, the ImmD mounted a cross-boundary joint operation with the Exit and Entry Administration Offices of the public security authorities of Guangxi and Guangdong and the Shenzhen Frontier Inspection Station, cracking down on a cross-boundary forgery syndicate that specialised in soliciting Mainlanders to take up illegal employment in Hong Kong, resulting in the arrest of a total of 201 persons and the seizure of a large quantity of forgery equipment and forged documents. In particular, the ImmD mounted an operation codenamed “Vanguard” and arrested 97 persons, including a syndicate mastermind and several core members, as well as a number of suspected illegal workers and employers suspected of employing them.

Meanwhile, the ImmD continues to strengthen its intelligence exchanges with the Mainland enforcement authorities to combat relevant unlawful acts. Under the established notification mechanism between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Mainland public security authorities, the ImmD regularly passes information on Mainland residents who have been convicted of criminal offences in Hong Kong to the Exit and Entry Administration Offices of the Mainland public security authorities, so that the relevant authorities can step up scrutiny when assessing their future applications for entry into Hong Kong. Such unlawful acts include illegal employment, breach of conditions of stay, possession or use of forged documents, submission of false statements, prostitution, begging, and other criminal offences punishable by at least 2 years’ imprisonment. Generally, the Mainland authorities will not issue exit endorsements or travel documents to such persons for a period of 2 to 5 years, depending on the circumstances, so as to prevent them from revisiting Hong Kong for unlawful activities.

Furthermore, the Cybercrime and Forensics Investigation Group of the ImmD has also been proactively combating cybercrimes related to illegal employment by conducting constant “cyber patrols”. It will take resolute enforcement actions against any person who is found using social media or instant messaging software to organise, arrange or incite the public to commit serious crimes, such as illegal employment. For example, in response to lawbreakers using social media to advertise the provision of cross-boundary services in Hong Kong (such as cleaning, tour guide, photography, purchase and delivery services), ImmD officers, upon intelligence analysis and in-depth investigation, swiftly identified the suspected persons and initiated an operation. These persons were then arrested when arriving in Hong Kong to provide such services.

As for publicity work, to enhance public awareness and inform employers of the serious consequences of employing illegal workers, the ImmD has deployed officers and promotional vehicles to black spots of illegal employment from time to time to distribute “Don’t Employ Illegal Workers” leaflets to employers, reminding them to inspect the original Hong Kong identity cards of job seekers, so as to verify whether they are lawfully employable. In addition, the ImmD has been actively announcing the latest enforcement results of anti-illegal worker operations and disseminating the message that “Employing Illegal Workers is an Offence” through its various official social media accounts for easy access by local employers, members of the public and visitors, so that they will not break the law inadvertently by employing illegal workers or taking up illegal employment.

The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the trend of relevant crimes, step up enforcement actions against illegal employment, disseminate the serious consequences of employing illegal workers through multiple channels, raise public awareness on not employing illegal workers and take stringent enforcement actions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB113

(Question Serial No. 2185)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As an international aviation hub, Hong Kong serves tens of millions of passengers annually. In the third quarter of 2024, the Immigration Department (ImmD) officially introduced the Advance Passenger Information (API) system, which aimed to facilitate the ImmD's identification of potential security risks more effectively and expedite passenger arrival procedures through obtaining passenger information in advance. The Security Bureau will "continue to oversee the phased rollout and operation of the API system by the Immigration Department" in 2024-25 and 2025-26. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) What is the allocation of resources for the API system in the 2025-26 Estimates? Please provide the details of the various budgetary arrangements, including the costs of system maintenance and technical support, system upgrades, the expenditure on related training for staff of the ImmD, and the budget for administrative support and ancillary facilities.
- (b) Is there any anticipated additional resource requirements upon the full operation of the system, and what is the impact on the staff establishment and expenditure? If yes, in which areas will these additional requirements be particularly shown? For instance, is there a need for the expansion of the system server to cope with the growth in data volume? Is there a need to recruit additional information technology professionals? What impacts of these additional resource requirements will be made on the staff establishment and overall expenditure of the ImmD?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

(a) and (b)

In the 2025-26 Estimates, the estimated recurrent expenditure for the Advance Passenger Information (API) system of the Immigration Department (ImmD) amounts to \$36.78 million. Upon the full operation of the system, the estimated annual recurrent expenditure will increase to \$73.55 million from 2026-27 onwards, with details of allocation as follows:

Item	Estimated recurrent expenditure	
	2025-26 (\$m)	From 2026-27 and onwards (\$m)
Hardware and software maintenance	17.9	35.8
Communication network	0.37	0.75
System maintenance and data broker services charges	17.26	34.51
Contract staff	1.25	2.49
Total	36.78	73.55

In addition, the staff establishment for facilitating the round-the-clock operation and system support of the 2 command centres at the Hong Kong International Airport is 41 in total, involving a total annual salary cost of about \$37.39 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value).

To ensure smooth operation of the system, the ImmD will continue to review the allocation of manpower and resources based on such factors as the number of visitor arrivals and relevant recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB114

(Question Serial No. 2187)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

With the conclusion of the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise in March 2023, a significant volume of identity card applications had to be handled with the processing time lengthened in 2024-25. It is mentioned that applications for identity card replacement are now centrally handled by the Registration of Persons – Kwun Tong (Temporary) Office. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) Is it still necessary for a continuous allocation of additional resources in 2025-26 to cope with the follow-up work and backlog applications arising from the identity card replacement exercise? If additional resources are still required, please explain the specific amount, staff establishment and allocation thereof.
- (b) If additional resources are no longer required, please state how these resources that were originally used for the identity card replacement exercise will be re-allocated, including the specific allocation of manpower, equipment and facilities.
- (c) Please provide the number of identity card applications pending processing and the estimated processing time as of early 2025, as well as the planning for the future operation of the Kwun Tong (Temporary) Office.

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

To cope with the growing demand for identity card services, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has launched numerous measures since March 2023 to boost the capacity of processing identity card applications, including the extension of the service hours of 4 designated Registration of Persons (ROP) Offices to 10 pm, and the establishment of the new ROP - Kwun Tong (Temporary) Office in November 2023 to focus on processing three types of identity card applications, namely (i) applications for replacement of identity cards from persons holding the old form of smart identity card (old identity card); (ii) applications for juvenile or adult identity cards for persons reaching the age of 11 or 18; and (iii) applications for permanent identity cards for persons holding identity cards with their eligibility for permanent identity card verified.

Upon the implementation of various service enhancement measures, the ROP Offices' overall capacity in processing identity card applications has substantially increased, which enabled members of the public to make an appointment within the bookable period.

It is estimated that the total number of various types of identity card applications will be about 828 000 in 2025 (including about 61 000 replacement applications), which will be increased by 38% when compared with the annual number of about 600 000 applications before the pandemic. The increase is mainly attributed to the first-time registration of identity cards under various talent admission and labour importation schemes.

The measure of extending the service hours of 4 designated ROP Offices has completed after 31 December 2024 as planned and the ROP Offices have resumed normal services and working hours. At present, all applications for replacement of identity cards from persons holding the old identity card are handled by the Kwun Tong (Temporary) Office. According to the arrangement for invalidation of old identity cards announced last year, the old identity cards will be invalidated in two phases this year. Phase I will cover holders of old identity cards born in 1970 or after, whose old cards will become invalid on 12 May this year. Phase II will cover holders of old identity cards born in 1969 or before, whose old cards will become invalid on 12 October this year.

Taking into account of the aforesaid arrangement for invalidation of old identity cards and review of related service demand, the ImmD anticipates that the Kwun Tong (Temporary) Office will continue to operate until the third quarter of 2025. Relevant expenses to be incurred has been included in the ImmD's estimate for 2025-26. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the public's demand for various types of identity card services, and flexibly deploy resources and manpower as appropriate to handle the related work, having regard to the actual circumstances and demand.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB115

(Question Serial No. 2641)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[The question below concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

What were the numbers of applicants and successful applicants under the Top Talent Pass Scheme in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

As of 28 February 2025, the numbers of applications received and approved under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) since its implementation on 28 December 2022 are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022-23#	2023-24	2024-25 (as of February 2025)
No. of applications received	21 406	55 562	45 858
No. of applications approved	12 398	49 431	36 785

Note: Applications approved may not totally be those received in that year.

The TTPS has been implemented since 28 December 2022.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB116

(Question Serial No. 2642)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What was the number of persons who met the eligibility criteria for settlement and obtained a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card by taking up studies at local universities in the past 5 years? Among them, what was the number of persons who did not reside in Hong Kong for long term after obtaining the identity card?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

The statistics on entrants admitted to Hong Kong under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) who eventually acquired the right of abode in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Admission policy/scheme	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
IANG	3 117	3 449	3 495	4 441	4 128

Note: The figures are based on the applicants' status in Hong Kong at the time of application for the right of abode.

The Immigration Department does not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB117

(Question Serial No. 2643)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[The question below concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

What were the numbers of applicants and successful applicants under the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

The numbers of applications received and approved under the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (as of February 2025)
No. of applications received	9 714	11 462	13 282	24 727	26 611
No. of applications approved	7 926	10 168	11 841	21 875	23 743

Note: Applications approved may not totally be those received in that year.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB118

(Question Serial No. 2686)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding paragraph 249 of the Budget, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please set out the numbers of cross-boundary vehicles (if any) and passengers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 2 years, with a breakdown by type of vehicles (private cars and non-private cars, locally and non-locally registered vehicles) and type of passengers (local, Mainland and overseas).
2. What were the completion dates and construction costs of various land BCPs? What were the overall administrative expenses for various land BCPs in each of the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

1. According to figures from the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Customs and Excise Department, the numbers of inbound and outbound vehicles and passenger trips at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 2 years with breakdown by category are as follows:

Numbers of inbound and outbound vehicles

Control point ^{Note 1}	2023				2024			
	Private car	Coach	Shuttle bus	Goods vehicle	Private car	Coach	Shuttle bus	Goods vehicle
Lok Ma Chau	1 639 511	218 012	73 486	1 123 473	2 514 254	306 675	100 025	1 298 264
Man Kam To	54 953	66 663	N/A	546 367	100 892	70 733	N/A	696 825
Shenzhen Bay	1 975 357	85 945	N/A	1 452 425	3 077 399	216 996	N/A	1 642 977
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	1 529 648	71 235	337 469	295 760	3 370 434	127 138	430 213	358 542
Heung Yuen Wai	162 867	51 072	N/A	571 451	490 080	69 664	N/A	573 560

Note 1:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lok Ma Chau (passenger clearance services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (passenger clearance services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (operation commenced on 26 August 2020 with the provision of cargo clearance services; full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)
- Passenger and cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 and March 2022 respectively to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port

Numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips

Control point ^{Note 2}	2023			
	Hong Kong residents	Mainland visitors	Other visitors	Total
Lo Wu	35 668 049	9 344 083	322 640	45 334 772
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	30 155 371	10 481 958	207 740	40 845 069
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	8 849 130	10 210 674	594 188	19 653 992
Lok Ma Chau	6 185 295	2 009 105	202 862	8 397 262
Man Kam To	756 097	268 247	5 532	1 029 876
Shenzhen Bay	15 322 369	6 815 932	547 037	22 685 338
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	14 226 147	4 636 207	2 707 816	21 570 170
Heung Yuen Wai	9 353 977	3 055 749	40 335	12 450 061

Control point ^{Note 2}	2024			
	Hong Kong residents	Mainland visitors	Other visitors	Total
Lo Wu	52 053 941	11 598 442	563 787	64 216 170
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	43 031 683	11 715 385	305 844	55 052 912
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong	12 359 138	13 147 823	1 016 992	26 523 953

Control point ^{Note 2}	2024			
	Hong Kong residents	Mainland visitors	Other visitors	Total
Kong Express Rail Link				
Lok Ma Chau	9 146 923	2 601 262	309 252	12 057 437
Man Kam To	1 159 421	312 916	8 830	1 481 167
Shenzhen Bay	24 675 780	8 979 204	823 759	34 478 743
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	18 715 265	6 516 119	3 236 277	28 467 661
Heung Yuen Wai	20 824 613	4 547 015	128 710	25 500 338

Note 2:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)
- The Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services
- Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port

2. The commissioning years of various land BCPs, as well as the staff establishment and salary costs of the ImmD in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Control point ^{Note 1}	Commissioning year	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Lo Wu	1965	372	382	394
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	2007	126	129	132
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	2018	209	215	221
Lok Ma Chau	1989	185	190	193

Control point ^{Note 1}	Commissioning year	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)		
		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Man Kam To	1980	41	42	44
Shenzhen Bay	2007	234	240	251
Hong Kong- Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	2018	253	260	266
Heung Yuen Wai	2020	105	108	111

Note 1: The above table does not include the Hung Hom Control Point and Sha Tau Kok Control Point, both of which have ceased operation. The Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services. Passenger and cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 and March 2022 respectively to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

The ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the administrative expenses for the BCPs. Figures relating to the construction costs of the BCPs as mentioned in the question are also not available.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB119

(Question Serial No. 0576)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control, (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

“The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address” proposes providing self-service immigration clearance for invited persons participating in business, development and related activities from the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and providing one-stop handling of their applications for self-service immigration clearance and visa through a dedicated desk. The Estimates for 2025-26 indicate that the Immigration Department will introduce the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons by mid-2025.

In this connection, please inform this Committee of how the Government will provide immigration facilitation for invited persons through the scheme. What are the performance targets and the related estimated expenditure? Will it require additional smart immigration facilities? Furthermore, given that the “contactless channels” are operating well in Sha Tau Kok, will the Government consider expanding their use in this year?

Asked by: Hon YIM Kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

The Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons (the Scheme) was launched on 18 March this year. Unlike the previous practice for visitors to make their own applications, under the Scheme, relevant bureaux/departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government would actively invite nationals of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries who can make considerable contributions to Hong Kong’s economic development, or who have been invited to attend important events in Hong Kong, and provide them with more convenient immigration arrangements.

Currently, frequent visitors to Hong Kong may apply for self-service immigration clearance at the control points of Hong Kong. Among the 10 ASEAN countries, visitors from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam are required to apply for visas to visit Hong Kong. Under the Scheme, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will process the applications from invited persons through a one-stop electronic platform, and relax the application criteria for self-service immigration clearance by no longer considering the number of their previous visits to Hong Kong. As regards nationals of the 4 ASEAN countries who require a visa to visit Hong Kong, the ImmD will significantly simplify the required documents for visa

applications. Basically, they only need to submit a copy of their travel document and complete an electronic application form. Invited persons can enjoy self-service immigration clearance service at the control points of Hong Kong, which will greatly enhance clearance efficiency and experience. Under the Scheme, the ImmD will continue to utilise existing self-service immigration clearance facilities. No additional facilities will be required.

The ImmD will handle the work relating to the Scheme through flexible deployment of manpower and resources. There is no separate breakdown of the staff establishment and expenditure involved.

On the other hand, a pilot scheme on “contactless channel” for access to Chung Ying Street has been launched at the reprovisioned Chung Ying Street Checkpoint by the Hong Kong Police Force. This allows persons holding valid Closed Area Permits (CAPs) for entering and leaving Chung Ying Street (i.e. those who are living and working in Chung Ying Street, etc.) to, upon registration, use the “contactless channels” to verify their identity through facial recognition technology in order to enter and leave the checkpoint unimpededly. We will also study with relevant Mainland authorities the application of “contactless clearance” technology in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone in the future to provide travel convenience for designated personnel of the two parks.

The ImmD has been using facial recognition at the Hong Kong International Airport (i.e. the Flight Token service) to achieve contactless clearance since October 2022. Passengers only need to show their faces for identity verification during the check-in procedure in order to store their personal data in the database for comparison purposes. Thereafter, they may go through other procedures at the airport, including departure and boarding, using only their faces for identity verification, instead of repeatedly presenting their travel documents and boarding passes. During departure, eligible Hong Kong residents only need to scan their faces at the ImmD’s Flight Token contactless e-Channel cameras to complete departure clearance without the need to present any identification documents or QR codes.

The ImmD will continue to utilise technology to actively explore and implement clearance modes that are efficient, innovative and convenient, while reviewing the use of immigration facilities and system operation from time to time. It will continue to adopt more innovative technologies and convenient clearance modes to enhance immigration procedures and facilitate the flow of people, with a view to providing services of enhanced convenience and quality.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB120

(Question Serial No. 1500)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Regarding the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, the Top Talent Pass Scheme and the Technology Talent Admission Scheme, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the numbers of applicants and of those whose applications were approved, the actual numbers of entrants and their highest, lowest and average ages, their duration of stay in Hong Kong as well as their nationalities, and the processing time required for each application under the aforementioned schemes in each of the past 5 years;
2. the number and details of innovative technology projects put in place by the Immigration Department for enhancing the efficiency of visa application assessment and arrival registration, the amount of time shortened and the expenditure involved in each of the past 5 years;
3. the numbers and ranks of the staff responsible for the aforementioned schemes, the numbers and ratio of the permanent posts and supernumerary posts, the salary costs by rank, and the total salary costs?

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1. The numbers of applications received and approved under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) and the Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS) in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025)
QMAS [@]	No. of applications received	4 119	6 218	28 732	83 587	49 512
	No. of applications approved	2 173	1 980	4 478	13 631	9 327
TTPS [#]	No. of applications received	Not applicable		21 406	55 562	45 858
	No. of applications approved			12 398	49 431	36 785
TechTAS	No. of applications received	130	54	87	142	137
	No. of applications approved	122	53	82	125	114
Total	No. of applications received	4 249	6 272	50 225	139 291	95 507
	No. of applications approved	2 295	2 033	16 958	63 187	46 226

Note: Applications approved in a year may not totally be those received in that year.

[@] The numbers of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection exercises.

[#] The TTPS has been implemented since 28 December 2022.

A breakdown of the numbers of applications received and approved under the QMAS, the TTPS and the TechTAS by region and age (if available) of the applicants in the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

QMAS

Region	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
Mainland China	3 609	2 071	5 692	1 840	27 784	4 303	81 829	13 427	48 340	9 138
Canada	52	30	69	31	110	44	263	42	181	36

Region	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
Australia	33	12	51	26	102	38	221	41	138	43
U.S.A.	41	22	46	25	98	28	191	38	118	35
Others	384	38	360	58	638	65	1 083	83	735	75
Total	4 119	2 173	6 218	1 980	28 732	4 478	83 587	13 631	49 512	9 327

Note: The numbers of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection exercises.

Age	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications approved		No. of applications approved		No. of applications approved		No. of applications approved		No. of applications approved	
	General Points Test (GPT)	Achievement-based Points Test (APT)	GPT	APT	GPT	APT	GPT	APT	GPT	APT
18 to 39	1 527	11	1 396	9	2 996	8	8 656	27	5 372	38
40 to 44	373	6	356	1	937	5	3 266	16	2 691	9
45 to 50	214	8	171	4	435	3	1 478	8	1 047	4
51 or above	31	3	38	5	91	3	171	9	158	8
Sub-total	2 145	28	1 961	19	4 459	19	13 571	60	9 268	59
Total	2 173		1 980		4 478		13 631		9 327	

Note: The numbers of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection exercises.

TTPS

Region	2022-23#		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
Mainland China	20 215	11 729	52 298	46 753	43 141	34 983
U.S.A.	198	104	628	549	397	263
Canada	199	128	605	541	480	355
Australia	167	105	400	347	298	213

Region	2022-23#		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
Singapore	103	57	210	183	176	117
Others	524	275	1 421	1 058	1 366	854
Total	21 406	12 398	55 562	49 431	45 858	36 785

The TTPS has been implemented since 28 December 2022.

Note: Applications approved in a year may not totally be those received in that year.

Age	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025)
	No. of applications approved	No. of applications approved	No. of applications approved
18 to 30	5 813	14 669	11 291
31 to 40	4 054	17 946	11 765
41 to 50	1 994	13 000	10 859
51 to 60	495	3 522	2 596
61 or above	42	294	274
Total	12 398	49 431	36 785

TechTAS

Region	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25 (As of February 2025)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
Mainland China	78	70	38	35	68	64	133	115	119	100
Malaysia	2	2	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0
U.S.A.	2	1	6	7	2	2	2	2	3	3
Taiwan, China	2	4	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	4
United Kingdom	3	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Australia	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2
Korea	26	26	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
Others	16	14	4	4	10	9	6	7	9	5
Total	130	122	54	53	87	82	142	125	137	114

The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain breakdown statistics on applications received and approved under the TechTAS by age of the applicants.

The ImmD has been maintaining the statistics of talent admitted to Hong Kong under the QMAS, the TTPS and the TechTAS since 2023. As of February 2025, the relevant numbers of talent admitted to Hong Kong are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme	2023	2024	2025 (As of February)
QMAS	12 276	9 981	1 910
TTPS	35 583	39 918	6 495
TechTAS	128	117	21
Total	47 987	50 016	8 426

Regarding applications for visas/entry permits submitted under the TTPS and the TechTAS, the assessment will normally be completed within 4 weeks upon applicants' submission of all the required information and supporting documents. The application process of the QMAS involves consultation with the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals or the Government's Assessment Panel, etc. during the selection exercise. Thus, the processing time will be slightly longer and will vary depending on individual circumstances.

The ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

2. The ImmD introduced the "e-Visa" and electronic services for visa application with effect from 28 December 2021, allowing applicants to complete the entire process of visa application, including application submission, payment and "e-Visa" collection, online without having to attend an Immigration office in person.

"e-Visa"

Upon the introduction of the "e-Visa", all visas for entry and extension of stay have been issued in the form of "e-Visa", replacing the original sticker-type labels. Regardless of the submission method, applicants can pay the relevant fee online upon approval of their applications, and instantly print the "e-Visa" by themselves and/or save it as a PDF file on a personal mobile device or computer for readily use. Even if the "e-Visa" is lost, the holder can re-download the valid "e-Visa" free of charge without the need to re-apply.

An "e-Visa" contains a QR code for anti-forgery purposes. Persons concerned can verify the information on the "e-Visa" by scanning the QR code with the ImmD mobile application. The QR code on the "e-Visa" is generated by the ImmD's official encryption key. The information cannot be retrieved by scanning the QR code with other mobile applications. Those in need (such as employers and airline staff) may choose to verify the visa information by using the "e-Visa" enquiry service through the ImmD mobile application, the ImmD's website or the GovHK website, thereby streamlining their recruitment or flight check-in inspection procedures.

Electronic services for visa application

Under the electronic services for visa application, eligible applicants can submit their applications online through the ImmD mobile application, the ImmD's website or the GovHK

website. After the introduction of such services, applicants may complete the entire process of visa application (i.e. from application submission and payment to “e-Visa” collection) online, sparing them the need to attend an Immigration office in person. This achieves one-stop electronic services for visa applications.

Starting from 29 November 2022, the “e-Visa” and electronic services for visa application have been fully extended to all visa application types including visas/entry permits for visits, employment, investment, training, residence and study. As of end-February 2025, the statistics on electronic services for visa application since their full introduction are as follows:

	e-Visas issued	Electronic visa applications	Visas paid and collected online
Total	Over 2 600 000	Over 1 400 000 (accounting for 45% of the overall number of applications)	Over 1 660 000 (accounting for 66% of the overall number of applications)

The “e-Visa” and electronic services for visa application are supported by the Next Generation Application and Investigation Easy Systems (APPLIES-2). APPLIES-2 consists of 3 main components, namely Visa Automation System; Assistance to Hong Kong Residents, Births, Deaths and Marriage, Right of Abode Decision Support System; and Enforcement Case Processing System; and it costs about \$270 million. As the development costs of the “e-Visa” and electronic services for visa application were part of the cost of APPLIES-2, no separate breakdown is available.

3. The staff establishment (without supernumerary posts) and salary costs of the ImmD for processing applications made under the QMAS, the TTPS and the TechTAS are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2025-26						
		Chief Immigration Officer	Senior Immigration Officer	Immigration Officer	Chief Immigration Assistant	Assistant Clerical Officer	Clerical Assistant	Total
QMAS	Staff establishment (no. of posts)	1	19	68	23	0	3	114
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	1.38	21.03	53.45	14.76	0	0.75	91.37
TTPS	Staff establishment (no. of posts)	0	3	12	0	0	0	15
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	0	3.32	9.43	0	0	0	12.75
TechTAS	Staff establishment (no. of posts)	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	0	1.11	1.57	0	0	0	2.68

* In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB121

(Question Serial No. 2976)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[The question below concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

It is mentioned in the Budget Speech that over 430 000 applications were received under various talent admission schemes as of the end of last year with more than 270 000 approved, bringing some 180 000 talent to Hong Kong. Besides, the Government also plans to enhance the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTP) and the General Employment Policy (GEP) in order to attract non-degree talent with professional and technical qualifications and experience to come to Hong Kong with a view to addressing the problem of manpower shortage. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. Please list in a table the numbers of persons currently holding the relevant valid visas by talent admission scheme, including Category A, Category B and Category C of the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS), the GEP – Professionals (for non-Mainland residents), the ASMTP (for Mainland residents), the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG), the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), the Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS), the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents (ASSG), and the GEP – Entrepreneurs (for non-Mainland residents).
2. What were the numbers of visa applications approved under the aforesaid talent admission schemes in each of the past 3 years (2022-2024)?
3. Among the cases of visa applications for extension of stay under the aforesaid talent admission schemes, what were the respective numbers of applications approved and rejected in each of the past 3 years (2022-2024)? Please provide a breakdown by whether or not their limit of stay in Hong Kong had exceeded 180 days.
4. What was the number of successful cases of permanent identity card applications in each of the past 3 years (2022-2024)? Please provide a breakdown by type of visa held under the aforesaid talent admission schemes upon application.

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

1.

The Immigration Department (ImmD) has been maintaining the statistics of talent admitted to Hong Kong under various talent admission schemes since 2023. As of February 2025, a breakdown of the relevant numbers of talent admitted to Hong Kong is tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2023	2024	2025 (As of February)
Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS)	Category A	9 038	12 251	1 722
	Category B	19 568	20 255	3 656
	Category C	6 977	7 412	1 117
General Employment Policy (GEP)#		7 953	5 627	1 612
Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTP)#		11 705	11 887	1 758
Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG)		23 905	23 017	2 398
Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS)		128	117	21
Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS)		12 276	9 981	1 910
Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents (ASSG)		81	80	13
Total		91 631	90 627	14 207

The numbers do not include cases of short-term employment.

2.

The numbers of approved applications for visas/entry permits under various talent admission schemes in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2022	2023	2024
TTPS#	Category A	8	11 686	12 028
	Category B	184	27 319	20 985
	Category C	683	10 732	8 044
GEP	Employment Stream	13 373	26 181	34 969

Talent admission scheme		2022	2023	2024
	Investment Stream	122	89	89
ASMTTP		11 768	19 757	25 344
IANG		10 391	26 089	25 475
TechTAS		60	130	118
QMAS@		2 845	12 969	11 848
ASSG		56	97	80
Total		39 490	135 049	138 980

Note: Applications approved in a year may not totally be those received in that year.

The TTPS has been implemented since 28 December 2022.

@ Figures of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection exercises.

3.

The numbers of applications for extension of stay for visas/entry permits which were approved and rejected under various talent admission schemes in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme			2022	2023	2024
GEP	Employment Stream	No. of applications approved	15 554	14 578	13 956
		No. of applications rejected	1	4	4
	Investment Stream	No. of applications approved	431	355	237
		No. of applications rejected	1	0	0
ASMTTP		No. of applications approved	7 842	7 171	9 706
		No. of applications rejected	3	0	2
IANG		No. of applications approved	10 619	11 189	6 592
		No. of applications rejected	6	20	53

Talent admission scheme		2022	2023	2024
TechTAS	No. of applications approved	71	64	81
	No. of applications rejected	0	1	0
QMAS	No. of applications approved	1 110	1 309	2 113
	No. of applications rejected	0	0	1
ASSG	No. of applications approved	65	55	49
	No. of applications rejected	0	0	0
Total	No. of applications approved	35 692	34 721	32 734
	No. of applications rejected	11	25	60

Note: Applications approved and rejected in a year may not totally be those received in that year.

The first batch of visas under the TTPS has just started to expire at the end of December 2024. At present, only a small number of applications for extension of stay have been processed. There is insufficient relevant data for meaningful statistical analyses. The Government will closely monitor the data and announce the statistics in a timely manner after a sufficient number of applications for extension of stay have been accumulated and analysed.

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

4.

The statistics on entrants admitted to Hong Kong under various talent admission schemes who eventually acquired the right of abode in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme	2022	2023	2024
TTPS#	Not applicable		
GEP	4 125	4 370	4 219
ASMTP	1 126	1 649	1 606
IANG	3 495	4 441	4 128

Talent admission scheme	2022	2023	2024
TechTAS	0	1	3
QMAS	146	232	257
ASSG	12	26	29
Total	8 904	10 719	10 242

Note: The breakdown is maintained in accordance with the applicants' status in Hong Kong at the time of application for the right of abode.

The TTPS was launched on 28 December 2022.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB122

(Question Serial No. 3093)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the processing of loan applications on fire safety improvement works under the Building Safety Loan Scheme,

1. for the past 3 years, how many loan applications on fire safety improvement works were there, how many of these applications were approved by the Government and what was the amount involved? How many of these applications pertained to old single-block buildings?
2. for the past 3 years, how many loan applications on fire safety improvement works were rejected, and what were the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

1. & 2. Administered and vetted by the Buildings Department (BD), the Building Safety Loan Scheme covers repair, maintenance and upgrading works on building and sanitary services, fire services and electrical installations, replacement of lifts, underground drainage pipes, removal of unauthorised building works, etc. The BD refers loan applications involving fire service installations or equipment to the Fire Services Department for professional advice.

The information regarding the processing of loan applications pertaining to fire safety improvement works from 2022 to 2024 is tabulated below:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of applications	18	28	39
Number of approved applications	18	28	39
Amount involved (\$m)	1.6	0.8	2.7
Applications involving old single-block buildings	12	19	33

In the past 3 years, no loan applications pertaining to fire safety improvement works were rejected.

Apart from the abovementioned loan scheme, the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the total funding for the FSWS to \$5.5 billion. In 2018, 2020 and 2023, the URA rolled out 3 rounds of applications to assist more owners in need in upgrading the fire safety standard of their buildings. The relevant information is as follows:

	2018 (First round of application)	2020 (Second round of application)	2023 (Third round of application)
Applications meeting basic application requirements	2 046	596	1 293
Letters of “Approval-in-principle” issued	2 046	596	520 ¹

In terms of subsidy, as of end February 2025, the URA had disbursed about \$92 million to the owners of 199 buildings. The URA does not keep a separate breakdown on whether old single-block buildings are involved in the applications.

Note 1: As for the remaining 773 applications that meet the basic application requirements, to avoid an upsurge in demand for works which could drive up the cost of the fire safety improvement works required by the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572), the URA will issue letters of “Approval-in-principle” to applicants of approved applications in a gradual and timely manner.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB123

(Question Serial No. 1535)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding “to pursue legislative work for the introduction of the Registered Fire Engineer Scheme” and the work on reducing fire hazards in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please provide the following information regarding the various fire safety certification services provided by the Fire Services Department (FSD) under the Fire Services Department (Reports and Certificates) Regulations (Cap. 95C), the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulations (Cap. 95A), the Timber Stores Regulation (Cap. 464A), and the Dangerous Goods (Control) Regulation (Cap. 295G) in each of the past 3 financial years, with a breakdown by types of licensed premises: (i) the number of applications received; (ii) the average cost (i.e. manpower and administrative expenditures) and time required for processing each application; and (iii) the revenue gained from the various statutory charges stipulated in these pieces of legislations.
2. Has assessment been made to determine the annual savings in the FSD's manpower and administrative expenditures to be achieved after engaging the market in fire safety certification services, and will the relevant resources be allocated to other areas of work of the Department?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. Over the past 3 financial years, the number of applications received, the Fire Services Department's (FSD) processing cost and pledged processing time of the applications, and the revenue gained from the various stipulated statutory charges under the Fire Services Department (Reports and Certificates) Regulations (Cap. 95C), the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulations (Cap. 95A), the Timber Stores Regulation (Cap. 464A), and the Dangerous Goods (Control) Regulation (Cap. 295G) are tabulated below:

	Fire Services Department (Reports and Certificates) Regulations (Cap. 95C)^	Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulations (Cap. 95A)%	Timber Stores Regulation (Cap. 464A)&	Dangerous Goods (Control) Regulation (Cap. 295G)\$
The FSD's pledged processing time for related applications (working days)	31-34	51	41	41-44
The FSD's average cost for processing related applications (\$) #	7,903	2,185	1,995	13,620
2022-23				
Number of applications	4 814	813	43	1 824
Revenue (\$)	5,874,190	836,480	39,000	11,874,659
2023-24				
Number of applications	4 506	836	37	1 305
Revenue (\$)	5,863,710	823,650	36,110	14,739,651
2024-25 (as of 28 February 2025)				
Number of applications	3 847	690	34	1 199
Revenue (\$)	5,273,330	708,780	36,110	12,096,298

The average cost of different types of licences under the relevant regulations calculated based on the price level in the 2024-25 financial year.

^ The services of the FSD mentioned in the Fire Services Department (Reports and Certificates) Regulations (Cap. 95C) refer to the Department's certification services for the following licensed premises: general restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, factory canteens, bakeries, food factories, composite food shops, schools, premises for conducting registered courses or exempted courses, places of public entertainment and child care centres.

% The applications stated in the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulations (Cap. 95A) refer to the following applications made by any person to the FSD: registration as Class 1 and/or Class 2 contractor, registration as Class 3 contractor (written examination), registration as Class 3 contractor (interview), registration

as Class 3 contractor (workshop inspection/re-inspection), change of registered name or registered address, change of qualified person, and new workshop inspection/re-inspection.

& The applications mentioned in the Timber Stores Regulation (Cap. 464A) refer to the applications for timber store licences made by licence applicants.

\$ The applications mentioned in the Dangerous Goods (Control) Regulation (Cap. 295G) include applications for licences made by licence applicants for the special packing of pressure receptacle, and the store and use of dangerous goods.

2. To facilitate business operation and make good use of professional and qualified human resources in the market, the FSD has proposed to introduce the Registered Fire Engineer (RFE) Scheme. Under the Scheme, RFEs will be allowed to provide fire safety risk assessment and certification services for licence applicants of certain premises. Upon implementation of the Scheme, the FSD will maintain its existing risk assessment and certification services for applicants to choose from. The implementation of the Scheme will offer the market an additional option of completing the fire safety risk assessment and certification procedures, providing facilitation for both the public and businesses. When implementing the Scheme, to ensure that consistent fire safety standards will be applied, the FSD will require that fire safety requirements formulated by an RFE must be endorsed by the FSD before they are issued to the licence applicants. In addition, to ensure the quality of certification work of RFEs, at the initial stage of implementation of the Scheme, the FSD will select premises on a random basis for audit inspections of at least 70% of the certification completed by an RFE after he/she issues fire safety certificates to the applicants. Taking these duties into account, the possible manpower and resource savings at the initial stage of the Scheme is limited. In the long run, subject to further evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scheme, the FSD will conduct a comprehensive and holistic review across multiple aspects, such as manpower resources, deployment and departmental development, etc., with a view to enhancing efficiency and aligning with the long-term development of the Department.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB124

(Question Serial No. 3250)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service, (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding marine fire prevention strategies, please advise on the following:

- (a) How long does it generally take for fireboats and fire speedboats to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays from their respective berths? (Set out the time in Annex 1 and put a slash “/” for areas beyond the respective service areas of the vessels.)

Typhoon shelter	Fireboat								Fire speedboat
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter									
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter									
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter									
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter									
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter									
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter									
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter									
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter									
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter									
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter									
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter									
Tai O									
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)									
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area									
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun									

- (b) What were the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in each of the past 3 years (from 2022-23 to 2024-25)?
- (c) What will be the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in 2025-26?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

- (a) The estimated journey times (in minutes) generally required for fire vessels, including fireboats and fire speedboats, to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays within their main service areas from their respective stand-by berths are set out in the table below#:

Typhoon shelter/Bay	Fireboat										Fire speedboat
	1	2*	3	4	5	6@	7^	8	11**	12**	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	1.5	/	/	/	/	/	/	19
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	6	/	/	/	/	/	/	25
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	8	/	/	12
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter	/	/	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	29
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	7	/	/	17
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter	20	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3.5
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	7	/	/	16
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	8	/	/	16
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	8	/	/	12
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	1
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	15	20	10
Tai O	/	/	/	/	46	/	/	/	/	/	5
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	8
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area	/	/	/	/	/	/	11	12	/	/	19
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	3

Note:

- # The actual time taken for a fire vessel to arrive at the scene of a marine fire is affected by various factors, for example, whether the vessel is engaged in other operations (including participation in regular navigation training, exercise and inspection, or handling other emergency incident, etc.) when the fire call is received, and the marine traffic, waves, currents, wind direction, visibility and so forth at the time of the incident. Generally speaking, when the Fire Services Department (FSD) receives a call of marine fire incident, it will deploy at least 2 fire vessels nearest to the incident scene for operation. In addition, on-shore fire stations in the vicinity will promptly deploy fire appliances to nearby piers, where on-shore fire personnel carrying portable fire pumps and other firefighting equipment will board police launches or Marine Department vessels and head for the incident scene to provide support.

- * Fireboat No. 2 is a reserve fireboat, which mainly serves as a substitute for fireboats under maintenance and repair. It therefore does not have a specific service area.
- @ Fireboat No. 6 is deployed at Tsing Yi Fireboat Station and is responsible for waters near Tsing Yi and Ma Wan, including the oil terminals, oil tanker berths and dockyards, etc. in Tsing Yi District. The typhoon shelters and bays listed above are not within its service area.
- ^ Fireboat No. 7 was put into service in mid-October 2020. After resource redeployment, it has been berthed at North Point Fireboat Base for stand-by duty since October 2024 to provide fire and rescue services to the Victoria Harbour and the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.
- ** Fireboats No. 11 and No.12 were put into service in July 2023 and November 2024 respectively. They are currently berthed at Sai Kung Fireboat Base to mainly provide fire and rescue services to the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.

In addition, the FSD has 2 command boats and 8 speedboats stationed at the East and West Sea Rescue Berths of the airport. They are dedicated to handling incidents in the waters near the airport.

(b) & (c) The firefighting, rescue and fire prevention education work in respect of typhoon shelters is mainly taken up by the personnel responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD, with support from personnel of fire stations near the typhoon shelters. The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the expenditure for fire prevention work for typhoon shelters. The establishment of the disciplined grade staff responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD from 2022-23 to 2024-25 and in 2025-26 (estimate) is tabulated as follows:

Rank Year (as at 31 March)	Establishment			
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)
Senior Divisional Officer	1	1	1	1
Divisional Officer	2	2	2	2
Assistant Divisional Officer~	4	3	4	4
Senior Station Officer / Station Officer~	15	15	18	18
Principal Fireman	61	76	76	76
Senior Fireman	84	92	92	92
Fireman~	141	179	175	175

Note:

- ~ To cope with community development and further enhance its operational efficiency in the waters of Hong Kong, the FSD redeployed its manpower resources in 2024-25. As a result, the establishment of the Marine and Diving

Division has changed with the addition of 1 Assistant Divisional Officer and 3 Senior Station Officers/Station Officers and the reduction of 4 Firemen.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB125

(Question Serial No. 1274)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the documents provided by the Government that plans will be pursued to replace 3 fire vessels as well as the breathing apparatus and portable radio transceivers for firemen in 2025-26. In this connection, would the Government advise on the following:

- (1) Please provide the required expenditure for the proposed replacement of Diving Support Vessel, Fireboat No. 3 and Fireboat No. 5, as well as their serviceable life respectively; and
- (2) Please provide the respective existing number of breathing apparatus and portable radio transceivers, as well as the respective expenditure for replacing the above 2 types of fire equipment; and
- (3) Please provide the respective number of times where firefighting drones and firefighting robots of the Fire Services Department were involved in rescue work in the past year; and
- (4) Please provide the respective number of rescue calls arising from shut-in-lift and gas leakage incidents in 2024; and
- (5) Will the proposed "Reinforcing Fiscal Consolidation Programme" affect the efficiency of frontline firemen in handling emergency incidents and manpower deployment?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

- (1) The Fire Services Department (FSD) will pursue the replacement of 3 fire vessels in 2025-26 and the relevant information is tabulated below:

Vessel to be replaced	Approved commitment (\$m)	Expected serviceable life (years)
Diving Support Vessel	220	15

Vessel to be replaced	Approved commitment (\$m)	Expected serviceable life (years)
Fireboat No. 3	199	20
Fireboat No. 5	199	20

- (2) The FSD currently has 1 750 sets of breathing apparatus and 3 284 portable radio transceivers. The estimated expenditures for the replacement of breathing apparatus and portable radio transceivers are \$234 million and \$102 million respectively.
- (3) The number of times that FSD’s drones and firefighting robots were involved in firefighting and rescue operations in the past year are tabulated below:

	Number of times participating in firefighting and rescue operations in 2024
Drones	224
Firefighting robots	16

- (4) The number of shut-in-lift and gas leakage incidents calls received in 2024 are tabulated below:

	Number of calls received in 2024
Shut-in-lift	17 453
Gas leakage	1 088

- (5) The FSD will fully align with the Government’s strategy by reviewing resource allocation, examining workflows, continuously optimising service efficiency, controlling recurrent expenditures, and continuing to meet society’s demand for fire and ambulance services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1275)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

- (1) Please provide the respective number in 2024 for fire safety directions (Directions) that have not been complied with upon expiry and prosecutions instituted for Directions that have not been complied with upon expiry; and
- (2) Please provide the respective number of direct prosecutions instituted in 2024 for ventilating systems in buildings and in licensed premises that fail to meet the requirements set out in the Annual Inspection Certificate; and
- (3) Please provide the number of public lectures held to promote the use of automated external defibrillators in 2024.

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

- (1) The Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) came into operation in 2007 to require the upgrading of fire safety standards of pre-1987 composite and domestic buildings to meet modern fire protection requirements. Apart from old composite and domestic buildings, the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Buildings Department (BD) have been striving to enhance fire safety of other different types of old buildings. The Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) and the Fire Safety (Industrial Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 636) came into operation in 1997 and 2020 respectively. Same as Cap. 572, the FSD and the BD are the enforcement authorities (EAs) for Cap. 502 and Cap. 636.

The Government's policy intent is to encourage and drive owners' compliance with fire safety directions (Directions) on their own initiative, and has been providing assistance to owners in the form of financial, technical and coordination support. Nevertheless, the Government recognises that owners may still encounter practical difficulties when complying with the Directions. Therefore, when the EAs review the owners' justifications and are satisfied that there is positive progress in a case, they will grant an extension of time for allowing owners to have sufficient time for complying with the

Directions. However, for those recalcitrant cases with no progress, the EAs will take resolute enforcement action to enhance deterrent effect so as to drive owners to comply with the requirements of the Directions on their own initiative.

As of the end of February 2025, the number of Directions that have not been complied with and the relevant prosecution figures of the FSD and the BD are tabulated below:

Premises/Buildings	Fire safety directions that have not been complied with	Number of prosecution cases for fire safety directions that have not been complied with
Composite buildings and domestic buildings*	249 862	6 044
Specified commercial buildings and prescribed commercial premises^	9 051	515
Industrial buildings#	16 360	55

* Refers to the composite buildings and domestic buildings to which the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) applies.

^ Refers to the specified commercial buildings and prescribed commercial premises to which the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) applies.

Refers to the industrial buildings to which the Fire Safety (Industrial Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 636) applies.

- (2) Currently, the Ventilating Systems Group of the FSD conducts random audit checks on the ventilating systems with Annual Inspection Certificates received. No irregularities were found by the FSD during such annual certificate random checks in 2024, and therefore, no prosecutions were instituted.
- (3) The FSD held 392 public lectures to promote the use of automated external defibrillators in 2024.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB127

(Question Serial No. 2459)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been proactively adopting new technologies in recent years and has introduced new equipment such as drones and robotic dog, while proposing wider application of technology to enhance the efficiency of firefighting, rescue operations and ambulance services. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- 1) the FSD's staff establishment and expenditure currently involved in exploring the introduction of new fire-related technologies and equipment;
- 2) the major factors taken into consideration when introducing new equipment and technologies;
- 3) the estimated and specific expenditures on exploring or introducing new equipment in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

- 1) The Fire Services Department (FSD) has established various specialist units and operational teams to meet different rescue needs, such as the Information and Communications Technology Division, the High Angle Rescue Team, the Compartment Fire Behaviour Specialist Team, the Hazardous Materials Team and the Disaster Response and Rescue Team. Apart from discharging their day-to-day/operational duties, specialist unit and operational team personnel are also responsible for exploring the introduction of innovative technologies and advanced equipment and techniques with a view to enhancing operational efficiency and operational safety of fire personnel, so as to protect the lives and properties of the public in a more effective manner. The FSD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the staff establishment and expenditure involved in exploring the introduction of new fire-related technologies and equipment as it is part of the Department's work.

- 2) The FSD will take into account a number of factors in introducing new equipment and technologies, including operational efficiency, the safety of fire personnel, cost effectiveness and the application of technology, with a view to protecting the lives and properties of the public in a more effective manner.

Taking the application of drone technology in mountain search and rescue operations as an example, the FSD uses drones to search dangerous terrain and take a large number of photos. With the use of artificial intelligence technology, the photos are quickly examined to identify human-like objects, effectively quadrupling the speed of photo examination and significantly enhancing the efficiency of searching for missing persons.

Moreover, the FSD's firefighting robots have been put into service in recent years to assist in firefighting and rescue operations. Equipped with high-definition cameras and heat detectors, the robots can carry out prolonged firefighting and detection tasks in complex and high risk fire scenes, enhancing operational efficiency and reducing the risk posed to frontline fire personnel.

- 3) The expenditures on introducing new equipment and relevant technology applications in the past 3 years are about \$27.5 million.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB128

(Question Serial No. 2114)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the community education programme on the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of relevant training places provided and participants, as well as the expenditure and manpower involved in the past 3 years.
2. In view of the recent cases involving controversies related to AEDs (for instance, whether MTR should lend the relevant equipment when areas beyond the confines of its premises are involved), has the Department taken the initiative to follow up with the organisations concerned after the incidents and provide suggestions for improvement? What was the total number of cases involving similar circumstances in the past 3 years up to the present?
3. Has the Government kept statistics on the use of AEDs in the past 3 years up to the present, and will staff be deployed to conduct investigations on the maintenance condition of relevant equipment and whether the staff of relevant organisations are familiar with the usage guidelines of the equipment? If yes, what are the details; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 113)

Reply:

1. The Public Safety and Communication Division (PSC) under the Fire Services Department (FSD) is responsible for formulating strategies on public safety promotion and education, establishing close ties with media organisations, co-ordinating the dissemination of information on FSD's social media platforms and at incident scenes, and co-ordinating the implementation of various community emergency preparedness programmes. In the past 3 years, PSC staff co-ordinated the implementation of programmes such as the "Press to shock - Save a life" CPR & AED Course, the "Secondary School Student Digital AED and CPR Experiential

Programme” and the “Three Basic Skills on Emergency Preparedness”. The total number of participants are tabulated below:

Year	Number of participants
2022	3 182
2023	7 863
2024	10 358

The FSD does not keep separate statistics on the manpower and expenditure involved in providing the relevant training.

2. & 3. The FSD has been committed to enhancing the community’s emergency preparedness capability and launched the “AED Anywhere for Anyone” Programme as well as the “Centralized AED Registry for Emergency” (CARE) online platform in June 2021. The Programme aims at increasing the number of publicly accessible AEDs across the territory, and enhancing the public’s awareness and capabilities in using AEDs during emergencies. Under the Programme, the FSD has installed AEDs outside over 100 fire stations and ambulance depots for public use during emergencies, equipped over 700 FSD vehicles and vessels with AEDs, and regularly deployed staff to inspect all AEDs installed at FSD premises or vehicles/vessels.

Furthermore, the FSD has been encouraging all organisations that have AEDs installed to upload the information of their AEDs to the CARE website for public enquiry and use. As of March 2025, more than 370 organisations have installed and registered over 3 300 AEDs on the FSD’s CARE website. These organisations can formulate their own guidelines and prepare related information on the use of their AEDs on the website. The FSD will continue to provide advice on the procurement, maintenance and management of AEDs to the relevant organisations.

From 2022 to 2024, there were over 24 000 cases of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, of which 2 200 cases had members of the public using AEDs to provide first aid.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB129

(Question Serial No. 0999)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that loan applications on fire safety improvement works under the Building Safety Loan Scheme will be processed. Please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) The respective number of applications received and approved under the Building Safety Loan Scheme in the past year. What was the expenditure involved?
- (2) The details of the manpower deployment and estimated expenditure for the One-stop Coordination Office for New Fire Protection Facilities Acceptance to be established by the Government.
- (3) The details of the manpower deployment in respect of the 460 400 inspections conducted by the Department last year. In addition, what were the irregularities involved and compliance status with respect to the 17 775 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices issued in total by the Department?

Asked by: Hon LIAO Cheung-kong, Martin (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

- (1) Administered and vetted by the Buildings Department (BD), the Building Safety Loan Scheme covers repair, maintenance and improvement works on building and sanitary services, fire service and electrical installations, replacement of lifts, underground drainage, removal of unauthorised building works, etc. The BD refers loan applications involving fire service installations or equipment to the Fire Services Department (FSD) for professional advice.

According to the information provided by the BD, a total of 577 applications were received under the Building Safety Loan Scheme in the past year, of which 453 have been approved, involving a total expenditure of around \$51.9 million.

- (2) The to be established One-stop Coordination Office for New Fire Protection Facilities Acceptance (“One-stop Coordination Office”) [Note] comprises 21 uniformed officers and 41 professional and technical grade personnel. Since all personnel are deployed from FSD’s internal resources, no additional manpower or expenditure is involved.

Note: The One-stop Coordination Office will shorten the time required for the entire acceptance inspection process by a series of measures, such as enhancing communication with various stakeholders, advance scheduling of acceptance inspections, arranging pre-inspection meetings, and expediting the process with the use of technology.

- (3) A total of 460 400 inspections were conducted by various units of the FSD last year, including the Fire Protection Facilities Supervision Division, the Building Improvement Divisions, the Dangerous Goods Control Division, the Dangerous Goods Enforcement Division, the Licensing Group and the Ventilating Systems Group, and a total of 17 775 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) were issued, with the FSD instituting prosecution in 625 cases where the FHANs were not complied with upon expiry. The remaining 17 150 FHANs have been complied with/followed up on. The irregularities involved are tabulated below:

Irregularities	Number of FHANs issued
Floating obstructions to means of escape (MOE) and locked exits	8 050
Matters pertaining to the repair and maintenance of fire service installations or equipment	5 782
Matters such as unauthorised removal of smoke lobbies and smoke stop doors	3 617
Matters pertaining to the repair and maintenance of ventilating systems	131
Installation of metal gates or erection of other unauthorised structures that obstruct MOE	7
Others (e.g. installation of gates/doors at the exit of fireman’s lifts, installation of combustible wall linings / carpets / wall linings and carpets in protected corridors/staircases, etc.)	188
Total	17 775

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB130

(Question Serial No. 1984)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Among the indicators, both the number of fire safety improvement directions issued and the number of fire safety improvement directions complied with/discharged in respect of specified commercial buildings declined considerably in 2024. Meanwhile, the number of fire safety directions issued in respect of industrial buildings also declined significantly and the estimates thereof for 2025 will record an even greater decline. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

- a) the statistics on inspection of related matters conducted by the Department in the past 5 years;
- b) the reasons for the continuous decline anticipated by the Department in respect of the aforementioned items.

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

- a) The numbers of inspections conducted by the Fire Services Department (FSD) in the past 5 years on specified commercial buildings and industrial buildings in implementing the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance (Cap. 502) (FS(CP)O) and the Fire Safety (Industrial Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 636) (FS(IB)O) respectively are tabulated below:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of inspections on specified commercial buildings	3 810	5 811	4 594	9 032	8 309
Number of inspections on industrial buildings	3	4 503	5 417	10 322	9 001

- b) When formulating indicators for the fire safety improvement directions and fire safety directions issued and complied with/discharged under the FS(CP)O and the FS(IB)O, FSD will take into account factors such as the scale, the gross floor area and number of owners involved, etc, of the specified commercial buildings and industrial buildings under the inspection plan of the year.

In fact, during the inspections of the specified commercial buildings in 2024, FSD found that the scale of certain specified commercial buildings, the gross floor area and number of owners involved were smaller. Therefore, the numbers of fire safety improvement directions issued and fire safety improvement directions complied with/discharged in 2024 were correspondingly lower than those in 2023. According to FSD's estimation, the scale, the gross floor area and number of owners involved of the specified commercial buildings planned for inspection in 2025 are smaller than those in 2024. Therefore, FSD has correspondingly lowered the estimate for the numbers of fire safety improvement directions to be issued and complied with/discharged in 2025.

As regards the implementation of FS(IB)O, during the inspections of industrial buildings in 2024, FSD found that the scale, the gross floor area and number of owners involved of the industrial buildings inspected in the year were smaller. Therefore, the number of fire safety directions issued in 2024 was correspondingly lower than that in 2023. According to FSD's estimation, the scale, gross floor area and number of owners involved of industrial buildings planned for inspection in 2025 are larger. Therefore, FSD has correspondingly raised the estimate for the number of fire safety directions to be issued.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB131

(Question Serial No. 1716)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide the types, quantities, major uses and purchase price of/budget for the drones used or already procured by the Fire Services Department in 2024. Does the Government have plans to expand its drone fleet for rescue and firefighting purposes in 2025-26? If yes, please provide the relevant estimate.

2. It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that plans will be pursued to replace 1 Diving Support Vessel, Fireboat No. 3 and Fireboat No. 5, while the progress of the replacement and procurement of other fire appliances and vessels will continue to be monitored. Please list in the table below the fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2024 and their respective information.

Fireboat	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Target time of replacement	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

1. At present, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has 47 drones, which are mainly used for the search of persons awaiting rescue in mountain rescue incidents, detection and illumination in fires and detection of the presence of gas at the scene of chemical leakage incidents, etc. The total expenditure on drones and relevant detection equipment (e.g. Mobile Phone Locator) procured in 2024 was about \$3.32 million.

To enhance operational efficiency, the FSD plans to introduce drones with higher load-bearing capacity and apply the use of automated drone dock coupled with artificial intelligence to assist in the early detection of vegetation fires and vessel fires in typhoon

shelters, as well as to support different types of firefighting and rescue operations, etc. The total estimated amount involved is about \$2.1 million.

2. The information on the fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2024 is tabulated below:

Fireboat to be replaced	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Targeted time of replacement	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment (\$m)
Diving Support Vessel	26-29 metres/ 7 persons/ 25 knots	Expected for delivering to Hong Kong in the first quarter of 2030	Not applicable	220
Fireboat No. 3	30-32 metres/ 9 persons/ 25 knots	Expected for delivering to Hong Kong in the second quarter of 2029	Not applicable	199
Fireboat No. 5	30-32 metres/ 9 persons/ 25 knots	Expected for delivering to Hong Kong in the second quarter of 2029	Not applicable	199

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB132

(Question Serial No. 2188)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2025-26, the expenditure on specialist supplies and equipment will increase substantially from the revised estimate of \$95.81 million for 2024-25 to \$248 million for 2025-26, representing an increase of 159%. The provision for allowances will be reduced substantially from \$196 million for 2024-25 to around \$50.45 million, representing a decrease of about 74%. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) Please provide details of the specific types of equipment to be procured with the additional provision as well as their quantities and purposes. How will the procurement of the new equipment contribute to enhancing the Fire Services Department's capability in handling various types of disasters? Has the Government fully considered the needs for long-term maintenance and upgrades of the equipment when making the procurement?
- (b) Please elaborate on the allowance items to be reduced and whether this will have a direct or indirect impact on the remuneration package for fire personnel.

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

- (a) The additional provision will mainly be used for replacing the Fire Services Department (FSD)'s existing portable radio transceivers and breathing apparatus, with details as follows:

Type of equipment	Replacement quantity	Main purpose
Portable radio transceiver	3 400 units	To provide frontline personnel with reliable communication devices and network during operations, and support their rescue operations in different environments
Breathing apparatus	1 850 sets	To provide oxygen supply for fire personnel entering fire and rescue scenes

At present, the portable radio transceivers provided for frontline operational personnel by the FSD have been in use for over 10 years and the production of the associated radio parts and components has been gradually discontinued. The FSD will procure a new model of portable radio transceivers and associated ancillary equipment in a bid to enhance the quality of communication and operational efficiency in frontline operations.

Moreover, the breathing apparatus provided for frontline operational personnel by the FSD have been in use for over 15 years and the production of which has already ceased. The FSD will procure a new model of breathing apparatus and associated ancillary equipment in a bid to provide frontline fire personnel with the best equipment and enhance their operational efficiency. The new model of breathing apparatus and associated ancillary equipment incorporate various technologies, such as aids for strengthening communication among fire personnel under adverse conditions, couplings that allow quick connection/disconnection, and air supply sharing systems for use in emergencies.

By replacing the equipment, the FSD aims to enhance operational efficiency and operational safety of fire personnel with a view to better protecting the lives and properties of the public. When procuring the equipment, the FSD has prudently assessed the overall performance of relevant products in the market in terms of long-term repair and maintenance as well as upgrades to ensure that the equipment procured can meet the Department's long-term operational needs.

- (b) The adjustment in the provision for allowances is primarily due to changes in Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance. The remuneration package for service members will not be affected by the adjustment.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB133

(Question Serial No. 2691)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. How many people in total have been appointed by the Fire Services Department as Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responder (FSDCER) since the establishment of the FSDCER Scheme? What are the specific plans and expenditure in the promotion of the FSDCER Scheme in 2025-26?
2. How many secondary schools and secondary school students in total have participated in the Secondary School Student Digital AED and CPR Experiential Programme since its establishment?
3. How many "Press to shock - Save a life" CPR & AED Courses did the FSD organise in each of the past 3 years? What were the number of participants and staffing involved?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. To keep pace with the ever-changing Hong Kong society, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has in recent years proactively implemented a "community-based" public safety strategy. The "Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responder (FSDCER) Scheme" was launched on 14 December 2024 to consolidate and optimise the existing "Fire Safety Ambassador" and "Building Fire Safety Envoy" schemes, which have been implemented for years, with an aim to further enhance the fire safety awareness and emergency response capability of the general public. As of February 2025, the FSD has appointed a total of 555 FSDCERs.

In 2025-26, the FSD will actively recruit interested individuals from all 18 districts across the territory to participate in the Scheme, while encouraging regular public-facing organisations and institutions to join. In parallel, the FSD will provide training to volunteers for the 15th National Games, with an expected 1 600 volunteer leaders to be appointed as FSDCERs. The FSD aims to train 5 000 FSDCERs in 2025.

The Public Safety and Communication Division (PSC) under the FSD is responsible for formulating strategies on public safety promotion and education, establishing close ties with media organisations, co-ordinating the dissemination of information on the FSD’s social media platforms and at incident scenes, and co-ordinating the implementation of various community emergency preparedness programmes. The FSDCER Scheme is one of the programmes being co-ordinated and implemented by PSC staff. The FSD has deployed existing manpower to implement the Scheme, and the estimated expenditure on the Scheme’s activities and its promotion in 2025-26 is about \$210,000.

2. As of February 2025, a total of 26 schools and around 4 400 students have participated in the Secondary School Student Digital Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Experiential Programme.
3. The “Press to shock - Save a life” CPR & AED Course is one of the courses implemented by the PSC, and the FSD has deployed existing manpower to organise the relevant courses. The numbers of sessions and participants of the “Press to shock - Save a life” CPR & AED Course organised by the FSD over the past 3 years are tabulated below:

“Press to shock - Save a life” CPR & AED Course		
Year	Number of sessions	Number of participants
2022	215	3 182
2023	301	7 544
2024	277	6 305

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB134

(Question Serial No. 2692)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. What was the wastage rate of ambulanceman at each rank in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2024-25? What was the number of unfilled vacancies under the approved establishment of ambulanceman at each rank? What was the expenditure on overtime allowance for ambulanceman at each rank as a result of manpower shortage?
2. What was the replacement progress of town ambulances to be phased out by FSD in 2024-25? What was the overall fault rate of the FSD's ambulances, and what was its impact on the day-to-day dispatch of ambulances?
3. How many new ambulances were procured in the past 3 years? What was the expenditure incurred? How many of them have been put into service?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 42)

Reply:

1. The wastage of personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2024-25 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Establishment*	309	811	2 015
Wastage*	27	23	88

* As at 28 February 2025

The number of vacancies not yet filled under the establishment of ambulanceman at each rank in the FSD is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Vacancy*	10	23	41

* As at 28 February 2025

With the resumption of normalcy of the society and cases of respiratory tract diseases (such as COVID-19 and influenza) have been increasing from time to time due to seasonal factors, the demand for ambulance service has continued to rise. Hence, the FSD has arranged for its personnel to work overtime to meet the demand of emergency ambulance calls. The amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance for personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the FSD in 2024-25 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance (\$million)*	2.9	23.7	38.0

* As at 28 February 2025

- To maintain the age of ambulances at a healthy level and to ensure the overall reliability of the fleet, the FSD has formulated an ambulance replacement plan (Plan). Under the Plan, the FSD has to replace 62 town ambulances in 2024-25. As at 1 March 2025, the FSD has completed the replacement of 45 town ambulances and it is expected that the remaining 17 town ambulances will be put into service in the first to second quarter of 2025.

Apart from replacing ambulances under the Plan, the FSD also works with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to consistently monitor the efficiency of ambulance maintenance. Besides, the EMSD replaces parts for the ambulances on a regular basis to ensure the reliability of the fleet. Additionally, whenever there is a breakdown of an ambulance, the FSD will immediately refer the case to the EMSD for inspection and follow-up repairs. The FSD will also dispatch reserve ambulances to the units concerned for operational use to avoid affecting the dispatch and operation of ambulances.

In 2024-25 (as at 1 March 2025), the number of cases where the FSD ambulances required factory repairs (including corrective maintenance, accident repairs, and preventive maintenance carried out about 3 times a year for each ambulance) was 1 605.

- Approval was given for the FSD to procure 47 town ambulances in the past 3 years. The relevant information is tabulated below:

Year	Number of Town Ambulances Approved	Approved Provision (\$million)	Current Status*
2022-23	-	-	-
2023-24	39	111.28	29 town ambulances have been delivered and will be put into service in the first to second quarter of 2025; the other 10 are

Year	Number of Town Ambulances Approved	Approved Provision (\$million)	Current Status*
			expected to be put into service gradually starting from the third quarter of 2025.
2024-25	8	23.27	Tendering procedure has commenced.

* As at 1 March 2025

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB135

(Question Serial No. 2693)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service; (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

For the past 3 years, regarding the Fire Services Department,

1. how many complaint cases were received in each year?
2. how many such cases required investigation and how many cases were substantiated?
3. how many staff members were disciplined? What was the average investigation time for each case? What was the staffing and expenditure involved in handling the complaint cases?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 43)

Reply:

1. to 3. The Fire Services Department (FSD) records and handles each complaint case. In general, the FSD will provide a substantive reply to the complainant within 30 calendar days upon receipt of a complaint. For complicated cases requiring longer processing time, the FSD will inform the complainant of the progress of the case and the reasons why a longer time is needed for a response. Owing to difference in the level of complexity, type and nature for each complaint case, the time required for investigation varies from case to case. Moreover, as officers of different units and ranks in the FSD are assigned to handle complaint cases in addition to their main duties, the staff establishment and expenditure involved in handling complaints cannot be itemized separately. The number of complaint cases, substantiated cases and staff members subjected to disciplinary action in the FSD over the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of complaint cases	484	511	669
Number of substantiated cases	64	71	76
Number of staff members subjected to disciplinary action	14	28	39

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB136

(Question Serial No. 3133)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Prison Management, (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the net decreases of 24 posts under Programme (1) and 16 posts under Programme (2) in 2025-26, please state the reasons for the substantial decrease in posts, the posts to be deleted and the total amount of expenditure to be saved.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

In order to optimise the use of the civil service manpower resources and maintain the sustainability of our public finance, the Government has maintained zero-growth in the overall civil service establishment since 2021-22, with the overall establishment controlled at a level not exceeding that as at end-March 2021. The Correctional Services Department has, through management measures and digitalisation, re-prioritised and internally re-deployed its resources, streamlined work processes and capitalised on technology solutions to enhance efficiency.

In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of a total of 40 posts in the staffing establishment under Programme (1) "Prison Management" and Programme (2) "Re-integration". The posts to be deleted and the expenditure expected to be saved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be deleted	Annual salary expenditure (\$) #
Officer	2*	1,496,640
Assistant Officer I	2*	1,186,920
Clerical Assistant	27	6,729,480
Office Assistant	1	219,660
Workman II	8	1,585,920
Total	40	11,218,620

Based on the notional annual mid-point salary of 2024-25

* Time-limited posts

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB137

(Question Serial No. 1996)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated that opportunities are provided for adult persons in custody (PICs) under the Prison Programme to engage in useful work and vocational training so as to help them develop good working habits and acquire work skills with a view to facilitating their re-integration upon release; education and vocational training is provided for young PICs to enhance their opportunities of continuous education or gainful employment upon release. In this regard, please inform this Committee of the following:

- a) according to the indicators published by the Department, the success rate of the training centre re-integration programme within the supervision period (non-conviction in 3 years after discharge) in 2024 was 57.1%, which was lower than the 72.7% in 2023. What were the reasons?
- b) whether the Department considers that the existing education and vocational training programmes provided to discharged prisoners, etc. are adequate, and whether the Administration has assessed that the current participation, completion and passing rates of such programmes have reached a satisfactory level? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
- (c) What new specific plans and measures will be put in place by the Department in the coming year for the re-integration of adults and youngsters into society after release?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

- a) The effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes is affected by various personal and social factors, including the motivation and determination of supervisees to turn over a new leaf, support from community and their family, peer influence, etc.

According to the relevant statistics, among a total of 33 cases with supervision orders completed in 2023, 9 were re-offending cases while there were only 6 re-offending cases out of a total of 14 cases with supervision orders completed in 2024. Although there was

a reduction in the number of re-offending cases in 2024 over 2023, a significantly lower success rate was recorded since the base number of completed cases in 2024 was substantially smaller than that of 2023.

- b) Correctional Services Department (CSD) has all along been committed to providing education programmes and vocational training for persons in custody (PICs). Based on PICs' interests and abilities, CSD arranges for them to attend distance learning programmes and sit for public examinations, and organises market-oriented vocational training programmes for PICs to prepare themselves for employment after discharge. In addition, to encourage PICs to pursue continuing education and support them to continue their studies after release, CSD has earlier signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University and 8 University Grants Committee-funded universities respectively to provide PICs with various arrangements such as academic guidance and credit transfers. Moreover, CSD set up the Ethics College in 2023 to step up its efforts in assisting PICs in acquiring recognised qualifications for their smooth re-integration into society after release, and organised a two-year full-time Associate of General Studies distance learning programme in the Ethics College in September 2024 to provide PICs with an option for further studies. CSD has also extended the Ethics College to Pik Uk Prison to provide a half-day Associate of General Studies programme and half-day vocational training for graduates of the Ethics College who are unable to complete the associate degree programme during the remainder of their sentences. This allows them to receive short-term educational and vocational training and continuously equip themselves in preparation for re-integration into society upon their imminent release.

Given its existing resources, CSD does not provide education or vocational training programmes for discharged rehabilitated persons.

- c) In 2025-26, CSD will continue to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services, including enhancing PICs' determination to rehabilitate, taking forward rehabilitation programmes within and beyond the prison walls, and making its best endeavour to seek active participation and support for rehabilitation work from all sectors of the community, with a view to assisting PICs to turn over a new leaf and re-integrate into society.

The Department will, in collaboration with a non-governmental organisation, launch a rehabilitation programme targeting PICs serving a short-term sentence of less than a year, under which "one-stop" rehabilitation services will be provided during imprisonment and after release, including in-centre assessments made by professional social workers, participation in personal growth sessions at institutions, seeking employment and establishing a positive social network after release, etc. These services will help rehabilitated persons establish positive values, develop law-abiding awareness, explore personal strengths, build self-confidence and set life goals, thereby reducing the risk of re-offending.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB138

(Question Serial No. 0116)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. The Correctional Services Department has earlier indicated that more than 18 000 persons were newly admitted to correctional institutions last year, representing a year-on-year increase of 7%, and the average daily number of remands at correctional institutions exceeded 3 600, representing a year-on-year increase of 18%. As at the end of last year, there were a total of 674 vacancies for disciplined staff, accounting for about 10% of the total establishment.

What is the total number of persons in custody at present? Is there any occupancy limit for each correctional institution? How many of them have reached or exceeded the limit at present and what are the respective percentages? What are the measures adopted by the Administration to alleviate the situation? Apart from the funding of \$403 million previously sought for the provision of additional technological facilities, will similar expenditure be increased for promoting smart prisons and expanding the space of institutions? If yes, what are the expenditure involved and the details? If not, what are the reasons?

2. Regarding staff recruitment, there are a total of 674 vacancies for disciplined staff. What are the emoluments and allowances involved as well as the expenses on recruitment promotion? What is the impact of the current manpower shortage on the day-to-day correctional work?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1. In 2024, the average daily occupancy rate of correctional facilities (excluding halfway houses) was 85%. The average daily penal population was 9 550 in 2024. Correctional institutions with an average daily occupancy rate exceeding their capacity in the same year are listed as follows:

Correctional institution	Average daily occupancy rate in 2024 (%)
Stanley Prison	116.4%

Tung Tau Correctional Institution	116.1%
Tai Lam Centre for Women	112.8%
Lo Wu Correctional Institution	103.1%
Shek Pik Prison	100.6%

In response to the ever-changing penal population, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) has deployed part of the capacity of individual correctional institutions and increased ancillary facilities. For example, the Department has already commenced the in-situ partial redevelopment of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre to increase its capacity. The Department will continue to closely monitor the changes in penal population and having regard to the actual operational needs, flexibly redeploy resources and adjust the capacity of correctional institutions in due course. The Department will also fully utilise its existing resources to keep exploring different “Smart Prison” initiatives, with a view to continuously enhancing the institutional management efficiency.

2. As at 31 December 2024, there were a total of 674 vacancies for disciplined staff in CSD. The notional annual salary cost at mid-point was about \$326 million. As regards the amount of allowances involved, it is subject to the nature of work and actual operational needs.

In 2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025), the actual expenditure incurred by CSD on recruitment advertisements was about \$750,000.

CSD will, having regard to the actual circumstances, adopt various measures such as optimising work procedures, reprioritising work, making good use of information technology and flexibly deploying manpower, etc. to minimise the impact on its operations.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB139

(Question Serial No. 0117)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. What is the respective correctional and rehabilitation work provided for prisoners who were involved in black-clad violence and those contravening the National Security Law? In particular, whether there are any related counselling services arranged for them to facilitate their rehabilitation after release? If yes, what are the details in terms of the number of participants, their age and the effectiveness of the services, and what is the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

Since the outbreak of the “black-clad violence” in 2019, a large number of people involved in serious offences and with radical thoughts have been admitted to correctional institutions. In order to help them disengage from radical thoughts and behaviours, and re-establish correct values, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) launched the “Project PATH” (“the Project”) in November 2021, which was pursued along 3 focused rehabilitation directions, namely “understanding Chinese history and strengthening national education”, “psychological reconstruction and re-establishment of values” and “life planning and rebuilding of family relationships”, and with dedicated case managers carrying out regular assessment and providing follow-up services for these persons in custody (PICs). Regardless of whether the PICs were involved in the “black-clad violence” or contravened the National Security Law, CSD provides them with appropriate rehabilitation programmes along the 3 above-mentioned rehabilitation directions having regard to their rehabilitation needs. Participation in the Project is entirely voluntary.

If the above-mentioned PICs are subject to statutory supervision after release, apart from providing appropriate rehabilitation support and counselling service, CSD also provides them with community-based psychological counselling and organises different kinds of treatment programmes at its Multi-purpose Family and Rehabilitation Service Centres. For example, the Change Lab was set up to assist young supervisees to build up confidence and psychological resilience, so that they can overcome difficulties and resist temptations; the

family therapy centres are set up for rehabilitated persons with violent tendencies or radical thoughts to help them resolve family problems, so that they can rebuild family relationships. As for PICs who are not subject to statutory supervision after release, CSD may, according to individual needs and wishes, refer their cases to relevant organisations or non-governmental organisations for follow-up.

As at 28 February 2025, a total of 1 276 PICs involved in the “black-clad violence” or contravened the National Security Law, aged from 16 to 77 years old, have participated in the Project. On 28 February 2025, there were 543 convicted persons involved in the “black-clad violence” or contravened the National Security Law, of which 538 have participated in the Project voluntarily (about 99%). According to observation and assessment made by the correctional services officers, most participants actively took part in the activities under the Project and responded positively. The recidivism rate of the 279 rehabilitated persons who have participated in the Project and have been discharged for 2 years or above is 0.7%, which is substantially lower than the recidivism rate of 21.8% of other discharged persons, indicating satisfactory results of the Project. As the implementation of the above Project and the provision of psychological and counselling services to supervisees after discharge are part of the re-integration work of CSD, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB140****(Question Serial No. 0118)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

1. There is a reduction of 40 non-directorate posts in this financial year. Meanwhile, it is reported that there are 674 vacancies for disciplined staff in the Department. What is the impact of the reduction in manpower on correctional work? What are the reasons for the deletion and reduction of posts?
2. What were the modernised equipment procured by the Department to facilitate its prison management work and the relevant expenditures involved in the past 5 years?
3. What were the staffing establishment and the numbers of applicants recruited as well as the emoluments and allowances involved, and related expenses on recruitment promotion involved in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)Reply:

1. In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 40 posts in the staffing establishment under both Programme (1) "Prison Management" and Programme (2) "Re-integration". The ranks and numbers of the posts to be deleted are tabulated below:

Rank	Number of posts to be deleted
Officer	2*
Assistant Officer I	2*
Clerical Assistant	27
Office Assistant	1
Workman II	8
Total	40

* Time-limited posts

In order to optimise the use of the civil service manpower resources and maintain the sustainability of our public finance, the Government has maintained zero-growth in the overall civil service establishment since 2021-22, with the overall establishment controlled at a level not exceeding that as at end-March 2021. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) has, through management measures and digitalisation, re-prioritised and internally

re-deployed its resources, streamlined work processes and capitalised on technology solutions to enhance efficiency.

2. Projects involving modernised equipment (innovation and technology) completed by CSD and the relevant expenditures in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Technology project	Non-recurrent expenditure (\$) (The expenditure is charged in the year of project completion)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Intelligent Robotic Monitoring System			about \$0.68 million ¹		
			about \$0.58 million ²		
				about \$6.79 million ³	
Automatic Drone Patrol and Monitoring System					about \$1.35 million ²
Electric Locks Security System (with facial recognition function)			about \$4 million ¹		
Video Analytic Monitoring System		about \$2.52 million ²			
			about \$5.94 million ³		
					about \$4 million ³
					about \$2.08 million ¹
Visit Monitoring and Intelligence Gathering System				about \$4 million ¹	
Persons in Custody Escort and Monitoring System					about \$3.94 million ¹
					about \$1.28 million ²
Robotic Dog Patrol System					about \$1 million ²
					about \$0.7 million ¹
Movement and Location Monitoring System	about \$1.46 million ²				
		about \$6.90 million ¹			
		about \$3.50 million ²			
Smart Health Sensing System				about \$0.59 million ¹	
					about \$0.2 million ¹

Technology project	Non-recurrent expenditure (\$) (The expenditure is charged in the year of project completion)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Staff Access Control System		about \$0.7 million ¹			
Contactless Vital Sign Monitoring System					about \$6.68 million ¹
Custodial Management and Movement Tracking System				about \$7.48 million ³	
				about \$0.64 million ²	
Robotic Logistic System			about \$0.72 million ²		
Health Signs Monitoring System			about \$9.19 million ³		
Persons in Custody Integrated Intelligent Communication System		about \$3.10 million ¹			
			about \$5.54 million ⁴		
			about \$1.78 million ²		
				about \$2.98 million ⁵	
Integrated Custodial and Rehabilitation Management System				about \$352.75 million ⁶	
Total:	about \$1.46 million	about \$16.72 million	about \$28.43 million	about \$375.23 million	about \$26.63 million
	about \$448.47 million				

3. As the staff members assigned to handle the recruitment work are not only responsible for one single area of work, it is difficult to separately calculate the staffing establishment, number of staff and the salary involved in the recruitment work. The actual expenditures on recruitment advertisements incurred by CSD in the past 5 years are as follows:

Year	Amount (\$)
2024-25 (as at 28 February 2025)	about \$0.75 million
2023-24	about \$1.81 million
2022-23	about \$1.01 million
2021-22	0*
2020-21	less than \$10,000*

*Note: CSD had suspended recruitment promotion due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

- 1 Funded under CSD Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).
- 2 Funded by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund.
- 3 Funded under TechConnect (block vote) of the Digital Policy Office.

- 4 Funded under the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRF) Head 710 Subhead A007GX New administrative computer systems (block allocation).
- 5 Funding of about \$124.50 million under CWRF Head 708 Subhead 8038XL Full implementation of Persons in Custody Integrated Intelligent Communication System in 19 correctional institutions/facilities. The project is launched in phases. Following a tender exercise, the non-recurrent expenditure on technological development for the implementation of the system in Nei Kwu Correctional Institution is \$2.98 million.
- 6 Funded under CWRF Head 710 Subhead A036XL Replacement of core information technology systems with the Integrated Custodial and Rehabilitation Management System.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB141

(Question Serial No. 3152)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. The Department's targets are to maximise assistance and opportunities for rehabilitated offenders to make positive changes and re-integrate into society.

However, the success rate of the training centre re-integration programme within the supervision period (non-conviction in 3 years after discharge) dropped from 72.7% the year before last to 57.1% last year. What were the reasons? During the period, how many offenders were provided with counselling for rehabilitation? Will the Department review the relevant counselling work and set aside additional resources to enhance its effectiveness?

2. What was the expenditure on related rehabilitation work in each of the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

1. The effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes is affected by various personal and social factors, including the motivation and determination of supervisees to turn over a new leaf, support from community and their family, peer influence, etc.

According to the relevant statistics, among a total of 33 cases with supervision orders completed in 2023, 9 were re-offending cases while there were only 6 re-offending cases out of a total of 14 cases with supervision orders completed in 2024. Although there was a reduction in the number of re-offending cases in 2024 over 2023, a significantly lower success rate was recorded since the base number of completed cases in 2024 was substantially smaller than that of 2023.

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) reviews from time to time the effectiveness of its rehabilitation work and rehabilitation programmes, and utilises community resources to step up collaboration with non-governmental organisations, so as to offer comprehensive rehabilitation services to persons in custody at institutions and supervisees after release and assist their re-integration into society in all aspects.

2. CSD's financial provisions under the Programme of "Re-integration" in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	2020-21 (Actual)	2021-22 (Actual)	2022-23 (Actual)	2023-24 (Actual)	2024-25 (Revised estimate)
Financial provision (\$ billion)	1.1137	1.1499	1.2054	1.2217	1.2400

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB142

(Question Serial No.1771)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Anti-narcotics Investigation

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding enforcement against space oil drug, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

What enforcement actions have been taken since the inclusion of etomidate into the First Schedule to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance at the end of February 2025?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has stepped up enforcement efforts and adopted a holistic approach in combating “space oil drug” at the levels of import, distribution and retail. Regarding the interception at boundary control points, C&ED has also strengthened its intelligence analysis and risk management in order to select cargoes and passengers for examination precisely. Besides, etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, has been added to the databases of the “Raman spectrometers” and the “ion scanners” to enhance detection capability.

From the listing of etomidate and its three analogues under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance on 14 February 2025 to 14 March 2025, C&ED detected a total of 10 related cases with 18 suspected etomidate infused capsules and 14 grams of suspected etomidate and its analogues in powder form seized, and arrested 9 persons.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB143

(Question Serial No. 2721)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Control and Enforcement

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the smuggling of raw meat and eggs and the enforcement actions taken, please provide:

the numbers of interceptions targeting illegally imported raw meat and raw eggs conducted by the Customs and Excise Department and the numbers of cases with seizures in the past 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25), with a breakdown by control point.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

Pursuant to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), each consignment of imported game, meat, poultry and eggs must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the issuing entity of the place of origin and/or import permission of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). Offenders are liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six-month imprisonment. Besides, under the Import and Export Ordinance (Cap. 60), it is required to apply for an import licence from FEHD for the import of frozen meat, chilled meat, frozen poultry or chilled poultry, and application procedures are specified in FEHD's website. These import requirements for food are imposed by the Government for public health reasons and the relevant policies fall under the purview of the Environment and Ecology Bureau.

The numbers of cases with seizures of illegally imported raw meat and raw eggs detected by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) at various control points in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Control Point	2022	2023	2024
Heung Yuen Wai	1	35	423
Shenzhen Bay	135	507	380
Lok Ma Chau	2	224	375
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	11	87	311

Control Point	2022	2023	2024
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	0	83	181
Lo Wu	0	32	95
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	0	31	86
Man Kam To	11	36	81
Hong Kong International Airport	5	11	17
Sha Tau Kok	1	0	11
China Ferry Terminal	0	6	1
Hong Kong - Macau Ferry Terminal	0	0	1
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	0	0	0
Total	166	1 052	1 962

If the above cases are suspected of contravening the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations, they will be referred to FEHD for follow-up actions. In addition, C&ED does not maintain record of the numbers of interceptions targeting illegally imported raw meat and raw eggs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB144

(Question Serial No. 1874)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Control and Enforcement

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Customs and Excise Department indicates that it has all along been applying risk management and intelligence exchange and analysis to combat various types of smuggling activities. Such measures include monitoring and inspecting passengers, cargoes and conveyances at various control points. In this connection, will the Government advise on the following:

Since it is suggested that equipment such as X-ray machines should be used extensively at various boundary control points to enhance the inspection of items brought by arrival passengers and on inbound vehicles, has the Government considered the suggestion? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

To enhance detection capability and clearance efficiency, the Customs and Excise Department is making use of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics to facilitate risk management, and has fully deployed advanced non-intrusive inspection equipment, such as Computed Tomography Scanners with AI functions, auto-detection devices for X-ray checkers, Smart Under Vehicle Robots, Platform for X-ray Image Evaluation, Vehicle Inspection and Strategic Analysis System, etc., in the inspection and clearance of passengers, cargoes and vehicles at various boundary control points.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB145

(Question Serial No. 2661)

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2024/25, what is the number of vacancies in each rank of Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) that have not been successfully filled based on the approved establishment? Is there any assessment and estimation of the number of wastages on retirement and resignation in the coming 3 years? In accordance with the 2025-26 Budget, each government department has to reduce recurrent government expenditure in the coming 3 years. In this connection, has AMS set plans to reduce recurrent government expenditure in the coming 3 years? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

As at 7 March 2025, AMS has a total of 3 519 volunteer members, accounting for 71.4% of the establishment of 4 931 members, with a total of 1 412 vacancies. The estimated natural wastage (including retirements) over the next 3 years is approximately 150 members, while the unnatural wastage (e.g. resignation) is difficult to estimate.

As always, AMS remains committed to recruiting more members by actively expanding its recruitment channels, such as setting up recruitment booths at more schools and shopping malls, participating in career fairs at various tertiary education institutions, and proactively recruiting retired ambulance personnel and senior nursing students who are about to graduate to become nurses. In addition, the induction training for new members has been reviewed, and class arrangements will be optimised to attract more dedicated individuals with busy work or study schedules to join the service, complete training, and contribute to the community.

In terms of retaining existing members, AMS has implemented measures to allow eligible volunteer members to extend their service from 60 to 65 years of age. It will also continue to enhance members' morale, sense of belonging, and satisfaction through various initiatives, including providing continuous training and personal development in different areas to members, collaborating with hospitals and tertiary institutions to improve members'

professional medical knowledge, recognising outstanding members, improving promotion paths, and introducing new uniforms and equipment, etc.

AMS is reviewing and consolidating first aid equipment and material distribution processes, as well as preparing to implement measures such as electronic duty reporting and pay and allowances calculation to improve resource utilisation. In addition, AMS will adjust its services and manpower deployment as appropriate based on risk assessment and actual circumstances, and will continue to provide resources to augment the regular medical and health services in an efficient and effective manner, so as to maintain the care and well-being of the people of Hong Kong.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB146

(Question Serial No. 2665)

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

According to the Director of Audit's Report No. 80, the total number of cases treated by AMS in country parks and on cycling tracks in 2020 and 2021 were 3 361 and 4 054, respectively. However, only 4% and 7% of these cases were related to country park duty, while more than 90% were related to cycling track duty. The provision of first aid or ambulance services in country parks involves 8 duty areas, with 1 to 5 members deployed to each area. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

- 1) The number of duty days in each of the past 2 years;
- 2) The total number of cases treated and the detailed distribution of cases treated in each duty area in each of the past 2 years;
- 3) The number of patients who were discharged and hospitalised after receiving treatment from AMS members in each of the past 2 years;
- 4) The total amount of pay and allowances of the relevant duty members in each of the past 2 years;
- 5) Whether the Government has discussed with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) the possibility of adjusting services in response to the lower demand in some duty areas? If so, what are the details? If not, why?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

1) Generally speaking, AMS deploys volunteer members to country parks to provide first aid services to members of the public in need on Sundays and public holidays. The number of duty days of AMS in country parks in 2023 and 2024 were 66 and 58 respectively. AMS will continue to review service demand and flexibly allocate resources to serve the public.

2) & 3)

The number of cases treated by AMS volunteer members in country parks over the past 2 years is summarised in the table below:

First aid posts	Number of patients treated		Number of patients discharged		Number of patients hospitalised	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Tai Mei Tuk	160	116	153	112	7	4
Pak Tam Chung	13	4	11	4	2	0
Aberdeen	18	8	18	8	0	0
Bride's Pool	10	0*	10	0	0	0
Nai Chung	6	0 [#]	6	0	0	0
Motorcycle ambulance – Tai Mei Tuk to Bride's Pool	4	4	4	2	0	2
Motorcycle ambulance – Pak Tam Chung to Nai Chung	2	0	1	0	1	0
Motorcycle ambulance – Shing Mun to Tai Mo Shan	6	12	5	10	1	2
Total	219	144	208	136	11	8

* Services at the Bride's Pool first aid post have been suspended since 25 February 2024 as it is awaiting maintenance.

[#] Services at the Nai Chung first aid post have been suspended since 8 May 2024 as it is awaiting maintenance.

4) The total amounts of pay and allowances for the relevant duty members in 2023 and 2024 were \$835,000 and \$688,000 respectively.

5) AMS has maintained ongoing communication with AFCD, including discussions on the deployment of personnel to country parks. AMS will continue to review the actual situation and service demand and adjust its services and manpower deployment in a timely manner. The aim is to provide resources to augment the regular medical and health services in an efficient and effective manner, so as to maintain the care and well-being of the people of Hong Kong.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB147

(Question Serial No. 1985)

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain Eddie LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under the Indicators, the flying hours of both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters dropped in 2024, with those for operations relating to law enforcement, training, as well as other tasks of government departments showing a more significant decrease. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) What are the statistics on the flying hours of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters providing various kinds of flying services in the past 5 years?
- b) What are the reasons for the drop in the flying hours of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for all of the above operations in 2024? Will the Government Flying Service (GFS) review the flying proficiency of pilots and the quality of their training having regard to this situation?
- c) Under the Matters Requiring Special Attention, the GFS points out that it will continue to enhance its operational capability and strengthen its human resources to provide effective and efficient flying services to the community and the Government. In the coming year, the GFS will also focus on enhancing the training and development of frontline staff to better prepare them for the new challenge ahead. Will the GFS elaborate on the specific plans for enhancing flying quality and the estimated proportion of funds to be earmarked?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

- a) The statistics on the flying hours of the various kinds of flying services undertaken by fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in the past 5 years are set out as follows:

Task	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft
Casualty evacuation	1 166	N.A.	1 202	N.A.	1 160	N.A.	1 137	N.A.	1 292	N.A.
Search or rescue	1 107	108	1 174	123	892	150	702	51	602	61

Task	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft	helicopter	fixed-wing aircraft
Law enforcement	8	5	30	4	9	0	55	0	28	0
Fire fighting	223	1	220	1	158	1	86	1	128	0
Other tasks for government departments	983	296	1 076	360	917	316	1 156	218	1 019	233
Training	2 539	1 453	2 043	1 155	1 578	695	2 013	990	1 841	373
Miscellaneous	94	6	116	8	246	75	186	59	279	41
Total	6 120	1 869	5 861	1 651	4 960	1 237	5 335	1 319	5 189	708
	7 989		7 512		6 197		6 654		5 897	

(Note: The figures for individual operations in the above table may slightly deviate from those in the Controlling Officer's Reports due to rounding.)

b) The flying hours of each category may vary each year according to actual needs and circumstances. The decrease in the flying hours of fixed-wing aircraft in 2024 was related to aircraft overhaul maintenance and aircrew availability. As always, apart from conducting regular reviews of the flying proficiency and training quality of pilots, the Government Flying Service (GFS) will closely monitor the flying standards and relevant training arrangements of all pilots, thereby ensuring a high level of efficiency and fulfilment of safety standards in their discharge of operational duties, and that their training arrangements are adequate and professional.

c) As regards the training and development of frontline crew members, the GFS will continue to leverage advanced technology to enhance training, such as utilising flight simulators and virtual reality training devices to enhance the flying proficiency of all aircrew members. In addition, the GFS collaborates with overseas professional training institutions and service organisations to provide training for aircrew members. Efforts have also been made to provide scenario-based training for all frontline crew members, such as maritime and mountain search and rescue operations, so that pilots and crew members at different experience levels could adopt their flying techniques and adhere to procedures more effectively when taking up emergency response missions. The estimated training costs of the GFS for 2025-26 is \$24.748 million, accounting for 5.3% of the operational expenses under Subhead 000.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1719)

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain Eddie LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please tabulate the establishments and actual number of recruits of the Pilot, Air Crewman Officer, Aircraft Engineer and Aircraft Technical Officer grades of the Government Flying Service (GFS) in 2023-24 and 2024-25.
2. In 2024, the actual flying hours of fixed-wing aircraft were 708 hours and the training hours were 373 hours, which is a significant decrease as compared to 1 319 hours and 990 hours in 2023. What are the reasons behind the decline in fixed-wing aircraft flying hours? What services have been affected by the reduction in flying hours?
3. In 2024, the number of exchanges between the GFS and mainland organisations, foreign organisations (including the navy) as well as the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison, excluding the drills or exercises mentioned in question 4.
4. In 2024, the number of drills or exercises conducted by the GFS with mainland organisations, foreign organisations (including the navy) as well as the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison, along with the details of these projects and the names of the participating organisations.
5. Does the GFS have plans to replace its fleet? If so, please provide details and the relevant budget.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

1. The establishments of the Pilot, Air Crewman Officer, Aircraft Engineer and Aircraft Technical Officer grades of the Government Flying Service (GFS) in 2023-24 and 2024-25 are tabulated as follows:

Grade	Establishment ^{Note 1}	
	2023-24	2024-25
Pilot	67	67
Air Crewman Officer	61	63
Aircraft Engineer	37	37
Aircraft Technical Officer	102	102

Note 1: The establishment refers to the actual establishment of the department as of 31 March of the financial year.

The number of recruits for the Pilot, Air Crewman Officer, Aircraft Engineer and Aircraft Technical Officer grades of the GFS in 2023-24 and 2024-25 is tabulated as follows:

Post	Number of recruits	
	2023-24	2024-25
Cadet Pilot	7	-
Air Crewman Officer III	-	-
Aircraft Engineer	10	1
Aircraft Technical Officer	9	5

2. The decrease in the flying hours of fixed-wing aircraft in 2024 was related to aircraft overhaul maintenance and aircrew availability.
3. The GFS has been actively engaging in exchange activities with other organisations. In 2024, it conducted a total of 25 exchanges of different natures with mainland organisations (excluding the drills or exercises listed under question 4), fostering mutual understanding and cooperation through reciprocal visits, field trips and technical seminars.
4. In 2024, the GFS conducted a total of 3 drills or exercises with other organisations, involving mainly emergency response, search and rescue. The participating organisations included the China National Offshore Oil Corporation Limited, Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, Macao Marine and Water Bureau, and the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison.
5. The GFS mainly operates 7 H175 helicopters and 2 CL605 fixed-wing aircraft to provide 24-hour emergency air rescue and other aviation support services for government departments and the public. These helicopters and aircraft were officially commissioned in 2018 and 2015 respectively. They are efficient and reliable, with relatively young service age. The GFS has no plan for fleet replacement or retirement at this stage.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB149

(Question Serial No. 1998)

Head: (27) Civil Aid Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Civil Aid Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Civil Aid Service (LEUNG Kwun-hong)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the target items, the Civil Aid Service (CAS) failed to meet the target of providing crowd management services for major public functions in 2023 and 2024. The CAS also failed to meet the man-hour target in certain other items, such as providing community services by the CAS cadets. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) The statistics on the overall performance of the CAS in the above areas where the targets were not met in the past 5 years;
- b) What are the reasons for the CAS's failure to achieve the targets in the relevant activities in the past 2 years? Has the CAS formulated improvement plans and measures for the non-achieved items? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- c) Are there any statistics on the CAS's involvement in maintaining order and providing crowd control and crowd management services in mega events in the past 3 years? If yes, what are the details; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

- a) The statistics on the provision of crowd management services for major public functions by CAS in the past 5 years are as follows:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Hours of Crowd Management Services (hour)	24,000	30,000	20,000	69,000	74,000

The statistics on the number of hours of community services provided by the CAS cadets in the past 5 years are as follows:

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of Hours of Community Services (hour)	1,400	5,000	6,000	11,000	13,000

b) and c)

Starting from 23 January 2020, the CAS focused on supporting the Government's response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic and was mainly responsible for managing the quarantine centers and the community isolation facilities. The related work continued until 28 February 2023, when the Penny's Bay Community Isolation Facility ceased operation. The epidemic resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of major public functions during this period, which had a significant impact on the number of hours of crowd management services provided by the CAS. With the gradual resumption of major public functions subsequently, the CAS has been actively involved in crowd management for major events across districts, including the Chinese New Year Fairs, float parades, Chinese New Year Fireworks Display, international marathons, Cheung Chau Bun Festival Grand Parades, International Dragon Boat Races and Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations, among others. The related service hours have rebounded to 74,000.

Looking ahead, with the Government's continued efforts to promote the mega-event economy and to tie in with the opening of the Kai Tak Sports Park, the demand for crowd management services will further increase. In addition, the CAS will actively liaise with various event organisers to provide assistance, with a view to achieving the target for crowd management services within this year.

The CAS provides diversified training to its cadets, including participation in community services such as assisting in crowd management at low-risk large-scale events. From 2020 to 2022, the number of community service hours of cadets was also significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels due to the impact of the COVID-19. With the resumption of social activities, these hours have gradually increased in 2023 and 2024.

In the future, the CAS Cadet Corps will continue to participate in various community service activities upon the invitation of government departments and non-governmental organisations. It will also proactively strengthen cooperation with these organisations to jointly organise more community initiatives, providing cadets with more opportunities to serve the community. Moreover, the CAS will continue to review and enhance the existing training activities of the Cadet Corps, and organise more national security activities to deepen the sense of patriotism with affection for our Country and Hong Kong. In addition, the CAS will offer diversified community services to cultivate the cadets' sense of responsibility and commitment to serving the public, nurturing them as future community leaders.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0564)

Head: (121) Independent Police Complaints Council

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Police Complaints Administration

Controlling Officer: Secretary-General, Independent Police Complaints Council
(Daniel MUI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The objective of the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) is to ensure that investigation of Reportable Complaints by the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) of the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) is carried out in a thorough, impartial and efficient manner. In this connection, would the authority concerned please advise this Committee:

1. The staff establishment and salary expenditure of the IPCC in the past three years;
2. The number of complaints against the Police received and handled by the IPCC, as well as the average time required to examine the cases in the past three years; whether the IPCC has compiled a breakdown of complaint cases by category;
3. The number of recommended improvements to police practices or procedures made by the IPCC, and the number of recommended improvements accepted by the Police in the past three years;
4. The provision for 2025-26 is \$2 million (2.1%) lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, representing a decrease in the IPCC's provision for three consecutive years. In this regard, would the authority concerned please advise in detail the specific reasons for the reduction in the provision; and
5. As mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the IPCC will continue to strengthen its communication and engagement with stakeholders to facilitate their understanding of the IPCC's work. Please provide details of the channels through which the IPCC communicated with stakeholders, the number of participants and the relevant expenditure in the past three years. Has the authority concerned assessed the effectiveness of such practices? If yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. The number of posts and salary expenditure of the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) in the past three years are set out below:

Financial Year	Number of Posts	Staff Costs (\$'000)
2024-25	68	\$60,951 ^{Note 2}
2023-24	68	\$58,770
2022-23	74 ^{Note 1}	\$59,524

Note 1: The IPCC recruited additional staff between 2020-21 and 2022-23, to handle complaint cases relating to the riots in 2019.

Note 2: This figure may be subject to adjustment.

2. Under the prevailing two-tier police complaints system, all complaints against the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) are received, handled and investigated by the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) of the Police. Upon completion of the investigation, CAPO will submit the investigation reports of Reportable Complaints, together with all relevant files, documents and materials, to the IPCC for scrutiny. A Reportable Complaint case may involve a number of allegations. The number of Reportable Complaint cases and allegations received and handled by the IPCC, and the average time required for complaint examination in the past three years are set out below:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of 28 February 2025)
Number of Reportable Complaint cases received and handled	1 419	1 631	1 513
Number of allegations received and handled	2 218	2 318	2 168
Average number of days required for examination of each complaint allegation	105	69	84

A breakdown of the complaint allegations received and handled by the IPCC in the past three years (by category) is set out below:

Category of Allegation	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of 28 February 2025)
Neglect of Duty	1 033	1 106	1 079
Misconduct/ Manner/ Language	942	1 051	941
Assault	137	90	95
Unnecessary Use of Authority	73	39	29
Threat	20	23	16
Fabrication of Evidence	12	7	8
Police Procedures	1	1	0
Other Offences	0	1	0
Total	2 218	2 318	2 168

3. In the past three years, the Service Quality Improvement Initiatives (SQIIs) made by the IPCC have all been accepted by the Police. These SQIIs cover various policing areas, such as optimising traffic enforcement and stop-and-search procedures; making good use of computer forensic equipment and body-worn video cameras to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of policing work; and strengthening the communication skills and training of police officers with a view to enhancing their capability in responding to different situations whilst on duty. The relevant figures are set out below:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of 28 February 2025)
SQIIs made by the IPCC to the Police	19	20	16

4. To continue aligning with the Productivity Enhancement Programme applicable to all policy bureaux and departments, the IPCC will reduce its recurrent expenditure by 2% in 2025-26. By optimising resource utilisation, it is expected that the provision for the IPCC in 2025-26 will be sufficient to cover its daily operating expenditure.
5. In the past three years, the IPCC has enhanced the public's understanding towards the Council by engaging stakeholders from various sectors, organising school programmes, producing publications and promotional videos, etc.

The IPCC has maintained close communication with the Police. In addition to regular working-level meetings and joint meetings with police representatives, the IPCC has

conducted over 10 visits to various police units since 2022-23. These visits aim to facilitate in-depth exchanges with frontline police officers and gain insights into different challenges they face.

To reach out to more young people, the IPCC has organised about 70 talks and exhibitions in secondary schools through its school programmes in the past three years. The IPCC has also actively met and exchanged views with district committees (including Fight Crime Committee and Youth Development and Civic Education Committee) as well as relevant organisations from the Mainland and overseas. Through large display boards, promotional videos and game booths at district carnivals and on-site introduction by staff, the public could also gain a better understanding of the IPCC’s work. The total number of participants in these events exceeded 30 000. During the activities, the IPCC received immediate feedback and gathered comments through questionnaires from various stakeholders, who showed their support for the IPCC’s work with positive responses. A number of schools have extended invitations for continuous collaboration with the IPCC, which serves as proof of the recognition of the IPCC’s public education work among teachers and students.

Furthermore, the IPCC introduced its work to the public through feature articles in newspapers. The IPCC also produced an animated educational video targeting primary and secondary school students in 2023-24, as well as two promotional videos in 2024-25 to explain the IPCC’s SQII mechanism and the rights and responsibilities of complainants to the public.

The publicity expenditure of the IPCC in the past three years is set out below:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Expenditure (\$’000)	\$1,338	\$1,144	\$1,183 ^{Note 3}

Note 3: This figure may be subject to adjustment.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB151

(Question Serial No. 3380)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Director of Bureau's Office

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the working dogs of the disciplined services, will the Bureau inform this Committee of the following regarding the past 3 years:

- (1) which disciplined services departments currently utilise working dogs to perform duties, with a breakdown of the number of dogs by department;
- (2) what are the details of the guidelines established by various disciplined services departments for the utilisation of working dogs to perform duties;
- (3) what are the details of the duties performed by working dogs under each disciplined services department;
- (4) what are general weekly working hours of the working dogs under each disciplined services department;
- (5) have the disciplined services departments established a retirement age for their working dogs; if so, the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (6) what are the annual expenditures and manpower allocated by each disciplined services department for the management of working dogs;
- (7) what are the annual figures for injuries and fatalities of working dogs, the number of those euthanised, and the reasons for that;
- (8) what is the current number of retired working dogs, and does the Government provide support for their living (such as medical services); if so, the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (9) which disciplined services quarters currently permit the keeping of working dogs or retired working dogs?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 44)

Reply:

- (1) During the period from 2022 to 2024, the Correctional Services Department (CSD), the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) utilised working dogs to perform duties. The respective numbers of dogs as at 31 December of the relevant years were as follows:

Department	Number of dogs		
	2022	2023	2024
CSD	60	59	63
C&ED	44	51	58
FSD	9	9	8
HKPF	148	155	161

The Immigration Department and the Government Flying Service did not utilise working dogs to perform duties.

(2) The disciplined services departments have their own established guidelines for managing and taking care of working dogs. The guidelines set out in detail the relevant procedures and rules related to the utilisation of working dogs to perform duties, covering areas such as daily work scope, meal arrangements, rest schedules, rest station management, retirement arrangements and work safety. The guidelines aim to ensure that working dogs can perform their duties in accordance with standard procedures, while safeguarding the health and safety of both the working dogs and the personnel.

(3) The details of the duties performed by the working dogs of the various disciplined services departments are as follows:

Department	Details of duties
CSD	To perform duties in correctional institutions including carrying out security patrols, tracking searches and interception of explosive substances and contraband (including dangerous drugs, alcohol, tobacco and mobile phones, etc.) to prevent their illegal entry into the correctional institutions.
C&ED	To be deployed at the airport, container terminals and various land/railway/ferry boundary control points to assist in the customs clearance of passenger luggage, cargo and cross-boundary vehicles. Duties include searching for prohibited or controlled items, such as drugs, explosives, banknotes, firearms, and tobacco.
FSD	To assist in operations involving searching and rescuing missing or trapped individuals in mountain areas or sites of collapse incidents; and to assist in locating accelerant containers and searching for clothes or other items during fire investigations.
HKPF	To support operational needs by assisting in patrols, tracking and searching for missing persons, as well as detecting explosives, drugs, firearms and ammunition.

(4) The relevant work and training of the working dogs of various disciplined services departments are mainly carried out by their assigned handlers during their duty hours. After each operation and during its course, the handlers will ensure that their dogs have sufficient rest time. The weekly working hours for the working dogs of various disciplined services departments are as follows:

Department	General weekly working hours
CSD	18 hours
C&ED	48 hours
FSD	Work on a five-day week and an off-duty on-call roster
HKPF	48 hours

(5) Depending on the health conditions of individual working dogs and veterinary advice, the working dogs of various disciplined services departments generally retire at the age of 7 to 9 for the sake of safeguarding their health and maintaining service quality at a high level.

(6) During the period from 2022 to 2024, the respective manpower involved in managing working dogs in various disciplined services departments as at 31 December of each relevant year were as follows:

Department	Manpower		
	2022	2023	2024
CSD	26	25	24
C&ED	44	51	58
FSD	6	6	6
HKPF	131	142	144

We have not maintained a breakdown of the related expenditures.

(7) During the period from 2022 to 2024, no working dogs from any disciplined services department suffered serious injuries or died as a result of their duties. However, 2 working dogs from the CSD, 1 from the C&ED and 7 from the HKPF passed away due to illness. Apart from 1 dog that was sent to a registered veterinarian for treatment of illness but unfortunately could not be saved, the others were euthanised after assessment by registered veterinarians or veterinarians from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, to end their suffering caused by illness. Over the past 3 years, there were no such cases reported by the FSD.

(8) During the period from 2022 to 2024, the numbers of retired working dogs and the details of the support for their living (such as medical services) provided by the Government are as follows:

Department	Number of retired working dogs in the past 3 years	Details of the support for the living of retired working dogs
CSD	20	Retired working dogs are generally adopted by their handlers or departmental staff. The CSD and the HKPF also allow eligible citizens to adopt retired working dogs.

Department	Number of retired working dogs in the past 3 years	Details of the support for the living of retired working dogs
C&ED	32	The disciplined services departments will provide the adopters with knowledge on caring for retired working dogs, including aspects such as health, feeding, grooming, living arrangements and interaction. The living support for retired working dogs, including necessary expenses, is borne by the adopters.
FSD	4	
HKPF	76	

(9) In general, the disciplined services departments will pay heed to the views of residents of quarters in deciding whether or not to allow working dogs or retired working dogs to be kept in individual quarters. The existing arrangements of various disciplined services departments are set out below:

Department	Arrangements for keeping working dogs/retired working dogs in quarters of disciplined services departments
CSD	In general, keeping dogs is allowed in quarters for married staff managed by the CSD. However, as some of these quarters are residential units within private housing estates, the regulations on dog keeping are subject to the terms of the deeds of mutual covenant of individual housing estates.
C&ED	Keeping of working dogs/retired working dogs is allowed in the Wong Tai Sin Sheung Fung Street Customs Staff Quarters.
FSD	Keeping of dogs, including working dogs/retired working dogs, is allowed in the quarters for officer rank staff of the FSD.
HKPF	Keeping of retired police dogs is allowed in the Junior Police Officers Quarters at Fan Garden, Fanling.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB152

(Question Serial No. 3313)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Bureau will continue to sustain the anti-drug momentum and further enhance efforts along the multi-pronged strategy in collaboration with relevant bureaux/departments and community stakeholders, including following up on various recommendations made by the Action Committee Against Narcotics. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. the number of drug trafficking cases detected and the number of persons arrested by the Bureau, as well as the major types of drugs involved in each of the past 5 years;
2. the number of young people aged under 21 who were arrested on suspicion of drug offences, as well as the categories of offences and the major types of drugs involved in each of the past 5 years; and
3. In view of the fact that drug abusers have become increasingly hidden and there is a downward trend in the age of drug abusers, and that some lawbreakers have made use of the internet as a platform for selling drugs, taking advantage of the curiosity of young people to lure them to try the more hidden and new types of drugs such as the "space oil drug", have the Bureau taken further measures to crack down on internet drug sale and the lawbreakers? How will the Bureau strengthen co-operation with schools and community stakeholders in the future to publicise the information and educate young people to stay away from drugs and resist drugs?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. The annual number of drug trafficking cases detected by the Hong Kong Police Force and Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, as well as the related number of persons arrested, over the past 5 years, are listed as follows:

	Number of drug trafficking cases	Number of persons arrested
2020	1 735	1 337
2021	1 767	1 520
2022	1 711	1 397
2023	2 076	1 399
2024	2 081	1 406

The top 3 types of drugs involved in arrests for drug trafficking each year are listed as follows:

	Major types of drugs involved		
	1st	2nd	3rd
2020	Methamphetamine (Ice)	Cannabis	Cocaine
2021	Cannabis	Methamphetamine (Ice)	Cocaine
2022	Cannabis	Methamphetamine (Ice)	Cocaine
2023	Cocaine	Cannabis	Methamphetamine (Ice)
2024	Cocaine	Cannabis	Methamphetamine (Ice)

2. The annual number of young people under the age of 21 arrested on suspicion of drug offences, along with the categories of offences and the types of drugs involved, are listed as follows:

	Serious drug offences [#]	Minor drug offences [^]	Total
2020	339	175	514
2021	465	213	678
2022	324	159	483
2023	195	128	323
2024	144	157	301

[#]Including drug manufacturing, trafficking or possession of large quantities of drugs.

[^]Including possession of small amounts of drugs for self consumption.

The top 3 types of drugs involved in the arrests of the above young people are lists as follows:

	Major types of drugs involved		
	1st	2nd	3rd
2020	Cannabis	Cocaine	Ketamine
2021	Cannabis	Cocaine	Ketamine
2022	Cannabis	Cocaine	Methamphetamine (Ice)
2023	Cannabis	Cocaine	Methamphetamine (Ice)
2024	Cocaine	Cannabis	Ketamine

3. To tackle the problem of online drug dealing, the law enforcement agencies have stepped up cyber patrol and taken relevant law enforcement actions on the Internet. Speeches, actions, videos or social media contents concerned may serve as evidence of an offence. To combat the exploitation of young people in drug trafficking, the law enforcement agencies may apply to the court for increasing the sentence of offenders who have exploited young people in drug trafficking, under section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134), so as to enhance the deterrent effect. Apart from law enforcement, the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB) and the law enforcement agencies have also launched publicity and education targeting young people. These initiatives actively utilise methods popular among the youth, such as social media, animated videos, key opinion leaders (KOLs), etc., the contents of which include a warning to the young people that young age is not a mitigating factor in court sentence, and that students involving in drug trafficking can also result in heavy penalty. The youth programmes organised by various disciplined services also cover anti-drug education activities. Young people participating in these programmes can bring anti-drug messages to their families, schoolmates and friends for dissemination in the community.

In respect of schools, the ND and the Education Bureau (EDB) have co-organised the Anti-“Space Oil Drug” Week campaign in all schools in Hong Kong to enhance the correct understanding among students of the harm of the “space oil drug” and strengthen their resolve to stay away from drugs. Following the campaign, the Government will continue to incorporate knowledge about combating the “space oil drug” in preventive education and publicity in schools to cultivate correct values and positive life attitudes among students, guiding them to practise lawful and appropriate behaviour, and establishing healthy lifestyles.

In addition, the Government will continue to vigorously implement diverse anti-drug programmes and measures in schools, with key initiatives including the following:

- (a) Healthy School Programme with a drug testing component: it is a school-based anti-drug education initiative which aims to foster a healthy drug-free culture in schools through students’ participation in diversified personal growth activities and voluntary school drug testing. The Programme facilitates the physical and mental development of students and consolidates their resolve to stay away from drugs. Diversified range of activities have been arranged, including leadership training, adventure activities,

emotional management workshops, growth support groups, career planning workshops, skill training workshops and parenting talks.

- (b) “Beat Drugs with Sports” Programme: a school-based student-led preventive education initiative without drug testing components aiming to promote healthy lifestyle and a drug-free culture in secondary schools. The activities are to be designed, organised and implemented by students and related to sports and/or health. At the same time, the activities incorporate anti-drug themes.
- (c) Strengthening teaching resources: anti-drug education forms a part of the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) for primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. The ND has developed in collaboration with the EDB teaching resources on anti-drug education.
- (d) Strengthening anti-drug capacity of teaching staff and school personnel: in collaboration with the EDB and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the ND arranges teachers and school personnel to receive anti-drug training to equip them with the knowledge of drug harms, misconceptions about drugs and common drug traps; techniques and skills in identifying at-risk or hidden drug-abusing students and Hong Kong’s anti-drug policy and local legislation, etc.
- (e) Interactive anti-drug drama: a drama tour that educates upper primary students in an interactive manner on drug harms, the skills of refusing drugs and the dire consequences of committing drug offences, etc.
- (f) Anti-drug education programmes for students: anti-drug education programmes for students are provided. Modules with different contents and modes of delivery suiting respective needs of schools are available to teach students the harms associated with drug abuse, and to enhance the resilience of young people against drug abuse.

For tertiary institutions, the ND has maintained, since 2023, close connection and collaboration with tertiary institutions and NGOs operating Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers, and promoting anti-drug preventive education and publicity in tertiary institutions. Efforts include holding anti-drug education talks, distributing publicity materials and broadcasting promotional videos, etc. The ND will also launch suitable initiatives having regard to the latest drug trends and student needs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB153

(Question Serial No. 4019)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. What are the number of non-refoulement claims received by the Government, the number of unsubstantiated claims, the number of removals and the number of claimants who had resorted to appeal and judicial review in the past 5 years, with a breakdown by gender, age and nationality?
2. What are the staff establishment and estimated expenditures of the Government for the handling of non-refoulement claims in the past 5 years? What are the details of the expenditures on publicly-funded legal assistance, humanitarian assistance, removals and other services provided by the Government for non-refoulement claimants?
3. Given that every year the Government has to spend a huge sum of public money on processing non-refoulement claims and related work, what measures are in place to further prevent and combat the abuse of non-refoulement claims? If there is any, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

(1) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2025, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024	2 814	2 715	97	842
2025 (January to February)	400	458	8	776
Total	28 154	26 790	7 287	

As at end-February 2025, ImmD received 28 154 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 491
Indonesian	5 361
Indian	4 618
Pakistani	3 251
Bangladeshi	2 546
Filipino	2 259
Nepalese	511
Thai	486
Nigerian	294
Other countries	2 337
Total	28 154

Among the above claims received by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 59% and 41% respectively; as broken down by age, 6% of the claimants were aged below 18, 12% aged between 18 and 30, 41% aged between 31 and 40, and 41% aged over 40.

As for the 26 700 non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD (including 244 claims subsequently substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB)), the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD
Vietnamese	4 905
Indonesian	4 710
Indian	4 289
Pakistani	4 093
Bangladeshi	3 021
Filipino	2 083
Nepalese	702
Sri Lankan	429
Nigerian	392
Thai	375
Others	1 701
Total	26 700

Among the above claims not substantiated by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 63% and 37% respectively; as broken down by age, 6% of the claimants were aged below 18, 11% aged between 18 and 30, 39% aged between 31 and 40, and 44% aged over 40.

Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024	2 219
2025 (January to February)	398
Total	6 885

Among the 6 885 unsubstantiated claimants removed from Hong Kong by ImmD, the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of unsubstantiated claimants removed from Hong Kong
Indian	1 297
Indonesian	1 266
Vietnamese	969
Pakistani	953
Bangladeshi	803
Filipino	521
Nepalese	240
Thai	138
Sri Lankan	110
Nigerian	47

Nationality	Number of unsubstantiated claimants removed from Hong Kong
Gambian	47
Other countries	494
Total	6 885

ImmD does not maintain the breakdown by gender and age of the above 6 885 repatriated unsubstantiated claimants.

Since 2020, the number of appeals received by TCAB is as follows:

Year	Number of appeals received
2020	870
2021	2 098
2022	1 727
2023	1 395
2024	2 631
2025 (January to February)	404
Total	9 125

Among the 9 125 appeals received by TCAB, the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of appeals
Indonesian	2 667
Vietnamese	1 998
Indian	1 079
Filipino	893
Bangladeshi	886
Pakistani	824
Thai	278
Nigerian	78
Sri Lankan	55
Nepalese	53
Other countries	314
Total	9 125

Among the above appeals received by TCAB, as broken down by gender, male and female appellants accounted for 50.3% and 49.7% respectively. TCAB does not maintain the breakdown by age.

According to the Judiciary, the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) of the High Court from 2020 to 2024 is tabulated below:

Year	Number of applications for leave to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed*
2020	2 365
2021	1 673

Year	Number of applications for leave to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed*
2022	1 445
2023	2 087
2024	2 418

* The relevant statistics may vary at different report generation date and time since they are live data.

The Judiciary does not maintain the breakdown by gender, age and nationality of the above applications.

(2) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA)^ (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2020-21	311	47	95	540	992
2021-22	298	47	142	579	1 067
2022-23	305	50	108	590	1 052
2023-24	326	57	107	578	1 069
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	360	59	146	595	1 159
2025-26 (Estimate)	368	61	127	595	1 150

* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

^ Includes the expenditures of the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the "Duty Lawyer Service" and the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" operated by the Security Bureau. PFLA will be provided exclusively through the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants" from 1 April 2025 onwards.

@ Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is lower than the revised estimate for 2024-25, which is mainly attributable to the downward adjustment of the estimated expenditure for PFLA. In view of the drastic increase in the number of persons making non-refoulement claims from 2014 to 2016, the Security Bureau (SB) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants" (Pilot Scheme) in September 2017 to run in parallel with the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claims" operated by the Duty Lawyer Service (Duty Lawyer Scheme) to provide PFLA to non-refoulement

claimants, so as to expedite the handling of pending claims as soon as practicable. With the Pilot Scheme as well as ImmD and TCAB stepping up the screening of non-refoulement claims and the processing of appeal cases in a highly-efficient manner in recent years, the previous case backlog has generally been cleared. Based on the number of new claims received, the Duty Lawyer Scheme has the capacity to handle all referrals. In other words, the mission of the Pilot Scheme has already been achieved. As such, SB decided that PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. In view of the above arrangement, the estimated expenditure for PFLA in 2025-26 is \$127 million, which is around \$20 million (i.e. around 13%) less than the revised estimate for 2024-25. At the same time, when formulating 2025-26 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures, and continue to adopt measures on all fronts to enhance efficiency, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and public interest.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2020-21 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2020-21	207	72	73	36
2021-22	207	72	73	36
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	75	35
2024-25	207	81	73 [^]	35
2025-26 (Estimate)	207	81	73 [^]	35

* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2025, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2020-21, the non-civil servant posts in the Duty Lawyer Scheme are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	1	2	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	6	5	5	5	6	6

Rank	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26 (Estimate)
Court Liaison Officer	13	17	22	17	32	32
Senior Personal Secretary	4	2	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	4	4	4	6	6
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	1	1	1	2	2
Total	35	34	39	34	53	53

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office since 2020-21 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25	Number of posts in 2025-26
Civil Servant posts						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	0
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	0
Workman II	2	1	1	1	1	0
Non-civil servant posts						
Number	5	5	5	4	0	0
Total	16	15	15	14	10[^]	0[^]

[^] PFLA will be provided exclusively through the Duty Lawyer Scheme from 1 April 2025 onwards. Therefore, the Government has since 2024-25 commenced to reduce the number of civil servant and non-civil servant staff in the Pilot Scheme Office.

(3) The Government attaches great importance to the non-refoulement claim issue and has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, so as to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism being abused under a multi-pronged approach. Relevant measures include:

(a) Enhancing intelligence exchange: To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the HKSAR Government will continue stepping up tripartite intelligence exchanges with relevant law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and Macao. ImmD and the Hong

Kong Police Force have also collaborated with Mainland authorities to proactively strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal immigration activities of NEC IIs.

- (b) **Interception at source:** To prevent potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong, the Secretary for Security made the Immigration (Advance Passenger Information) Regulation under the Immigration Ordinance in March 2023 to specify that airline operators must provide the advance passenger information (API) data and aircraft information of every traveller through the API system prior to a flight's departure for Hong Kong. ImmD has launched the API system by phases since September 2024 and will complete its implementation in September 2025;
- (c) **Screening non-refoulement claims:** ImmD has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, including handling each new non-refoulement claim received instantly;
- (d) **Processing of claim-related appeals:** TCAB has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases. Currently, the average processing time of an appeal case has been reduced from over seven months in the past to about four months;
- (e) **Detention:** The Government will continue to reinforce ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. In addition to the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively, thereby increasing the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants to three. Moreover, NKCI will undergo in-situ expansion to provide 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%) when the project is completed in 2025. The overall detention capacity will increase to 940;
- (f) **Combating illegal employment:** To reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, ImmD and relevant law enforcement agencies have continued to take vigorous actions against illegal employment in a proactive manner, with the target of conducting no less than 13 200 operations on targeted establishments every year, in order to reduce the economic incentives for claimants;
- (g) **Claims lodged by foreign domestic helpers (FDHs):** As quite a number of non-refoulement claimants had been employed as FDHs prior to lodging their claims, SB and ImmD have been collaborating and will continue to proactively collaborate with the relevant Consulates General in Hong Kong to step up publicity and education for newly arrived FDHs, impressing upon them that the non-refoulement claim mechanism should not be abused and that working illegally in Hong Kong is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment. With the Government's strengthened publicity efforts, only 22% of new claims received in 2024 were raised by former FDHs, down from 58% during the peak in 2022; and
- (h) **Removal:** The updated removal policy took effect on 7 December 2022. ImmD would proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by

the CFI, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. The Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants. In 2024, 2 219 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong, surpassing that year's target by 68% (i.e. removing not less than 1 320 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong).

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

The above tasks have been included in the daily expenditures of SB and ImmD.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB154

(Question Serial No. 3893)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Security Bureau indicated that it will continue to implement the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) in the coming year. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please provide the number of old buildings which have already received the subsidy under the FSWS, with a breakdown by district.
2. Please give an account of the progress of the fire safety improvement works of the buildings concerned. What is the compliance status of the fire safety directions issued to the buildings concerned?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 73)

Reply:

1. To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the Ordinance), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the funding for the FSWS to a total of \$5.5 billion. It is estimated that the entire FSWS can benefit about 6 000 to 6 500 target buildings.

The URA rolled out 2 rounds of application in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Since then, the URA launched the third round of application from April to September 2023 to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings. There were 2 046 and 596 applications meeting the basic application requirements in the first and second rounds of the FSWS applications respectively. The URA issued letters of Approval-in-Principle (AIP) to the applicants of the above 2 642 applications (involving about 2 765 target buildings), and contacted them about the commencement of the fire safety improvement works. For the third round, there were 1 293 applications meeting the basic application requirements (involving about 1 462 target buildings). The URA issued letters of AIP to applicants of 520 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of the fire safety improvement works. As for the remaining 773

applications meeting the basic application requirements, to avoid driving up the cost of the fire safety improvement works required by the Ordinance due to a surge of demand for works, the URA will gradually and timely issue letters of AIP to successful applicants in batches. In the above-mentioned 3 rounds of application, the number of applications meeting the basic application requirements and with letters of AIP issued, is tabulated below by District Council district:

District Council district	Number of applications issued with letters of AIP
Central and Western	345
Wan Chai	279
Eastern	215
Southern	69
Yau Tsim Mong	771
Sham Shui Po	480
Kowloon City	317
Wong Tai Sin	102
Kwun Tong	61
Tsuen Wan	144
Tuen Mun	42
Yuen Long	161
North	21
Tai Po	67
Sai Kung	4
Sha Tin	29
Islands	4
Kwai Tsing	51
Total	3162

2. As regards progress of the fire safety improvement works, to comply with the Fire Safety Directions (the Directions) in accordance with the requirements of the Ordinance, the buildings mentioned above are under various stages of works. Some building owners are co-ordinating and employing works consultants/contractors, while others have submitted the plan of fire service installations or equipment to the Fire Services Department (FSD) for approval. For some buildings, the fire safety improvement works have already commenced. When the fire safety improvement works of these buildings and the FSD's subsequent acceptance tests are completed, the FSD will, after confirming that the requirements of the Ordinance have been met, notify the owners in writing that the Directions have been complied with.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB155

(Question Serial No. 3970)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What are the manpower, administrative and works (if applicable) expenditures incurred by the Government so far on the operation of the existing land boundary control points and the redevelopment projects of the Huanggang Port and Sha Tau Kok Control Point?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

The staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of various land boundary control points are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

Regarding the expenditure on the redevelopment project of the Huanggang Port, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has agreed in principle to bear the design and construction costs for the entire project (including the Hong Kong Port Area (HKPA)). The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will bear on its own the costs of other capital non-works items for the HKPA, such as furniture and equipment and information systems for the operation at the control point by various departments. As the HKPA is still at the design stage, estimate of the relevant expenditure is not yet available. The HKSAR Government will follow the established procedures to seek funding for the related items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

The engineering feasibility study for the Sha Tau Kok Control Point redevelopment project is underway and is expected to complete within 2025. The scope of the study covers road infrastructure, public transportation, land requirement, area of the control point, land ownership, environmental assessment and heritage conservation near the surrounding areas of Sha Tau Kok Control Point. According to the revised estimate of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the expenditure on the engineering feasibility study is about \$6 million.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB156

(Question Serial No. 3498)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In recent years, the various disciplined services departments under the Security Bureau have actively established youth organisations which are committed to taking forward the education and promotional efforts targeting young people. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the respective establishments, numbers of applicants and active members of the Auxiliary Medical Service Cadet Corps, the Civil Aid Service Cadet Corps, the Rehabilitation Pioneer Project of the Correctional Services Department, the Customs Youth Leader Corps, the Fire and Ambulance Services Teen Connect, the Junior Police Call, Project Gemstone, Project Himalaya and the Leadership Institute on Narcotics of the Hong Kong Police Force, and the Immigration Department Youth Leaders Corps in each of the past 3 years;
2. Further to the above, what were/are the expenditures of each youth organisation of the various disciplined services departments in the past 3 years and in 2025-26.
3. Further to the above, what were/are the staffing provision of civil servants and other Government employees responsible for managing and supporting the youth organisations of the various disciplined services departments and the relevant salary expenses in the past 3 years and in 2025-26?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 143)

Reply:

1. The Security Bureau and its disciplined and auxiliary services departments have all along been committed to youth development work. Diversified activities are organised to cultivate young people's physical and mental health, positive thinking, law-abiding and national security awareness, patriotism, and sense of discipline and team spirit, helping them equip themselves for contributing to Hong Kong and our country.

At present, all disciplined and auxiliary services departments have their own youth uniformed groups: in addition to the seven youth uniformed groups established by the disciplined and auxiliary services departments, the Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps has become a youth uniformed group subvented by the Government Flying Service since 1

April 2024. The memberships of various youth uniformed groups as at 31 December of the past 3 years were as follows:

	Membership		
	2022	2023	2024
Junior Police Call	161 486	160 365	153 965
Fire and Ambulance Services Teen Connect	180	450	1 076
Immigration Department Youth Leaders Corps	417	754	950
Customs YES (Note: the memberships of the Customs Youth Leader Corps, established under Customs YES, are in brackets)	3 238 (409)	5 580 (605)	7 935 (813)
Rehabilitation Pioneer Project of the Correctional Services Department	234	417	622
Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps	2 835	1 411	1 328
Civil Aid Service Cadet Corps	3 696	3 750	3 961
Auxiliary Medical Service Cadet Corps	1 895	1 887	1 939
Total	173 981	174 614	171 776

As all applicants who meet the eligibility criteria (e.g. age limit) will be accepted for membership, the numbers of applicants are not applicable here.

Besides, apart from the Junior Police Call, the Hong Kong Police Force also founded the Leadership Institute on Narcotics and implemented Project Gemstone and Project HIMALAYA. Among them, the Leadership Institute on Narcotics holds a one-year programme for a cohort of 100 mentees recruited from local secondary schools and universities each year. As for Project Gemstone and Project HIMALAYA, which aim to provide assistance to non-Chinese speaking youth, the cumulative numbers of participants in the past 3 years (as at 31 December of the year) were as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Project Gemstone	699	793	935
Project Himalaya	789	806	863

- 2-3. The resources for organising youth uniformed group activities of the disciplined and auxiliary services are subsumed under the recurrent expenses of the respective departments, and the implementation work of the youth uniformed groups involves numerous staff from different positions, including not only staff specifically tasked to handle the work of youth uniformed groups, but also a large number of staff who concurrently share other duties, contract staff, as well as on-duty and volunteer staff who take part or assist in organising various youth activities. As such, the departments concerned do not maintain a breakdown of the expenses and manpower in relation to youth uniformed groups.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB157****(Question Serial No. 3939)**Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security BureauSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: Not SpecifiedControlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

The abuse of non-refoulement claims by “bogus refugees” stranded in Hong Kong has not only caused serious impact on law and order in the community; it also requires the Government to spend over \$1 billion of public money each year to deal the problem of “bogus refugees”. The relevant expenditure in the past 12 years amounted to well over \$10 billion. Will the Government reply to the following questions:

1. What is the exact amount of financial expenditure on accommodation, subsidies, etc. for handling “bogus refugees”?
2. Has the Government conducted any assessment on the economic impact of “bogus refugees” on our local economy, including employment and market demand?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)Reply:

(1) Since 2006, the Government has been providing humanitarian assistance for non-refoulement claimants during their presence in Hong Kong in order to prevent them from becoming destitute, while at the same time not creating a magnet effect which could have serious implications on the long-term sustainability of such assistance and the immigration control of Hong Kong. Since 2020-21, the expenditures/revised estimate on providing humanitarian assistance for non-refoulement claimants are tabulated below:

Year	Humanitarian Assistance (\$ million)
2020-21	540
2021-22	579
2022-23	590
2023-24	578
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	595
2025-26 (Estimate)	595

(2) The proliferation of non-refoulement claimants and non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in Hong Kong imposes a heavy burden on the society and poses security risks to the community. Non-refoulement claimants are illegal immigrants, overstayers or persons who were refused entry upon arrival in Hong Kong. They do not have any legal status to remain in Hong Kong. Regardless of the outcome of their claims, they have no right to work in Hong Kong. It is also against the law for local employers to employ illegal workers. The Government attaches great importance to the non-refoulement claim issue and has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong, so as to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism being abused under a multi-pronged approach. Relevant measures include:

- (a) Enhancing intelligence exchange: To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the HKSAR Government will continue stepping up tripartite intelligence exchanges with relevant law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and Macao. The Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force have also collaborated with Mainland authorities to proactively strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal immigration activities of NEC IIs;
- (b) Interception at source: To prevent potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong, the Secretary for Security made the Immigration (Advance Passenger Information) Regulation under the Immigration Ordinance in March 2023 to specify that airline operators must provide the advance passenger information (API) data and aircraft information of every traveller through the API system prior to a flight's departure for Hong Kong. ImmD has launched the API system by phases since September 2024 and will complete its implementation in September 2025;
- (c) Screening non-refoulement claims: ImmD has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, including handling each new non-refoulement claim received instantly;
- (d) Processing of claim-related appeals: The Torture Claims Appeal Board has streamlined its processes to improve efficiency in handling appeal cases. Currently, the average processing time of an appeal case has been reduced from over seven months in the past to about four months;
- (e) Detention: The Government will continue to reinforce ImmD's capacity to detain non-refoulement claimants. In addition to the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, the Government included the Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution (NKCI) as detention facilities in 2021 and 2023 respectively, thereby increasing the number of detention facilities for detaining non-refoulement claimants to three. Moreover, on 1 April 2025, the in-situ expansion in NKCI was completed, which provided 40 additional detention places for a total of 276 places (an increase of about 17%). The overall detention capacity has been increased to 940;
- (f) Combating illegal employment: To reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, ImmD and relevant law

enforcement agencies have continued to take vigorous actions against illegal employment in a proactive manner, with the target of conducting no less than 13 200 operations on targeted establishments every year, in order to reduce the economic incentives for claimants;

- (g) Claims lodged by foreign domestic helpers (FDHs): As quite a number of non-refoulement claimants had been employed as FDHs prior to lodging their claims, the Security Bureau and ImmD have been collaborating and will continue to proactively collaborate with the relevant Consulates General in Hong Kong to step up publicity and education for newly arrived FDHs, impressing upon them that the non-refoulement claim mechanism should not be abused and that working illegally in Hong Kong is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment. With the Government's strengthened publicity efforts, only 22% of new claims received in 2024 were raised by former FDHs, down from 58% during the peak in 2022; and
- (h) Removal: The updated removal policy came into effect on 7 December 2022. ImmD could proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. The Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants. In 2024, 2 219 unsubstantiated claimants were removed from Hong Kong, surpassing that year's target by 68% (i.e. removing not less than 1 320 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong).

Under the premise of preventing abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. The Government will also continue to combat illegal employment vigorously and step up the promotion that illegal employment is a serious offence punishable by imprisonment, in order to reduce the impacts to the market brought by the illegal employment engaged by non-refoulement claimants.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB158

(Question Serial No. 3912)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In order to attract more talents from around the world, in particular those from the “Belt and Road” countries and regions, to seize the opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), will the Government draw on the experience of the “Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens)” and strive for the issuance of Mainland travel permits for overseas talents holding Hong Kong work visas, so as to facilitate their travel between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, as well as their active participation in the development of the GBA?

Asked by: Hon TAN Sunny (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) warmly welcomes and expresses gratitude to the country for issuing to non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents a card-type document with five-year validity (Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese Citizens)) (the Permit) with effect from July 2024. The measure represents a major policy breakthrough under “one country, two systems” implemented by the Mainland authorities with innovative thinking and fully highlights the unique status of the HKSAR. After the introduction of the Permit, individuals holding the Permit are able to enjoy self-service clearance at control points of the Mainland, and they are no longer required to fill in any arrival card. It has significantly enhanced clearance efficiency and facilitated access to the Mainland for business, travelling and visiting relatives etc. by non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents.

On the other hand, foreign staff of Hong Kong-registered companies (including non-permanent residents of Hong Kong) can make applications in Hong Kong for “northbound” multiple-entry visas to the Mainland with priority processing. Starting from October 2024, the validity period of the visa has been extended to a maximum of 5 years across the board. Both the “northbound” multiple-entry visa measure and the Permit are not limited to any nationality or industry, which fully reflects the diversity and internationalization of Hong Kong. The two measures complement each other to provide further facilitation to foreign talents in Hong Kong to visit the Mainland, allowing them to better tap into the opportunities

brought about by the rapid development of the country, and at the same time attracting more foreign talents who plan to develop in the Mainland to settle in Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government will maintain close communication with relevant Mainland authorities with a view to enhancing the level of convenience of Hong Kong residents travelling to and from the Mainland, as well as promoting better integration of the HKSAR into the overall development of the country.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB159

(Question Serial No. 3803)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Director of Bureau's Office

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The reform of laws on sexual offences is an important task to protect the general public, especially the underprivileged people. In recent years, with technological development and social changes, various new forms of image-based sexual violence have emerged, but improvement to the relevant legislation remains pending. To explain the resource allocation of the Government in the reform of laws on sexual offences, please provide the following information:

(1) What was the public expenditure involved in the Government's legislative and consultation work on legislating against image-based sexual violence (the proposed introduction of offences of voyeurism, intimate prying, non-consensual photography of intimate parts, and related offences) in the past? What was the breakdown of the relevant items?

(2) The Security Bureau has planned to conduct a public consultation on the reform of laws on sexual offences within 2025. What are the estimated resources to be allocated by the Government?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 43)

Reply:

(1) The Crimes (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 came into effect upon gazettal in October 2021. It has introduced specific offences against voyeurism, unlawful recording or observation of intimate parts, publication of images originating from the two aforementioned offences, as well as publication or threatened publication of intimate images without consent. The legislative and consultation work in this regard is absorbed by the regular manpower and resources of the Security Bureau (SB) and relevant departments. A statistical breakdown is not maintained.

(2) The Government plans to conduct public consultation on the law reform of sexual offences within 2025. The relevant work will also be absorbed by the regular manpower and resources of the SB and relevant departments.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB160****(Question Serial No. 3620)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the estimated recurrent expenditure on, including but not limited to a breakdown of salary, departmental expenses, equipment maintenance, miscellaneous administration expenses, etc., per service place of various types of institutions (prison, Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre, training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre, drug addiction treatment centre) in the last 5 financial years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 148)Reply:

The approved estimates of the total recurrent expenditures of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) in the past 5 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Total recurrent expenditure (\$ billion)
2024-25	5.1728
2023-24	5.0046
2022-23	4.8923
2021-22	4.4935
2020-21	4.4401

In addition to detaining persons in custody (PICs), the daily operation of CSD includes other related work and services that are not institution-specific, such as escort of PICs to and from courts and hospitals, provision of medical, welfare and aftercare services, etc. As such, it is not practicable to accurately calculate the recurrent expenditure on the custody of a PIC at a particular type of correctional facility.

The average daily penal population of correctional facilities in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Average daily penal population (persons)
2024	9 550
2023	8 498
2022	7 613
2021	7 616
2020	6 902

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB161****(Question Serial No. 3621)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the actual recurrent expenditures on, including but not limited to a breakdown of salary, departmental expenses, equipment maintenance, miscellaneous administration expenses, etc., per service place in various types of institutions (prison, Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre, training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre, drug addiction treatment centre) in the last 5 financial years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 149)Reply:

The actual total recurrent expenditures and the revised estimate of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) in the past 5 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Total recurrent expenditure (\$ billion)
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	5.2831
2023-24 (Actual expenditure)	5.1658
2022-23 (Actual expenditure)	4.9168
2021-22 (Actual expenditure)	4.6215
2020-21 (Actual expenditure)	4.3633

In addition to detaining persons in custody (PICs), the daily operation of CSD includes other related work and services that are not institution-specific, such as escort of PICs to and from courts and hospitals, provision of medical, welfare and aftercare services, etc. As such, it is not practicable to accurately calculate the recurrent expenditure on the custody of a PIC at a particular type of correctional facility.

The average daily penal population of correctional facilities in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Average daily penal population (persons)
2024	9 550
2023	8 498
2022	7 613
2021	7 616
2020	6 902

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB162

(Question Serial No. 3622)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average daily meal cost per person in custody in various types of institutions (prison, Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre, training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre, drug addiction treatment centre) in the past 5 financial years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 150)

Reply:

The average daily cost of food material per person in custody (PIC) in various correctional institutions in the past 5 financial years is as follows:

Financial year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Average daily cost of food material per PIC (\$)	25.8	29.2	29.2	31.1	36.8

(Note: The average cost is calculated based on the contract price of food material in the year, thus such meal cost is applicable to all institutions.)

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB163

(Question Serial No. 3623)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average annual education and vocational training cost per person in custody in various types of institutions (prison, Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre, training centre, detention centre, rehabilitation centre, drug addiction treatment centre) in the past 5 financial years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 151)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides half-day compulsory education programmes for young persons in custody (PICs) aged between 14 and 20 and arranges for qualified teachers to teach the subjects, having regard to the length of sentences and learning needs of young PICs. PICs who were studying post-secondary programmes before imprisonment may contact their tertiary institutions for suitable modes of study and learning materials. CSD would assist PICs upon their requests to continue to study the relevant programmes at correctional institutions. PICs may also enrol in distance learning courses offered by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University according to their abilities and interests. Correctional institutions would provide appropriate assistance to them.

On vocational training, CSD has been collaborating with various training bodies (including the Employees Retraining Board, the Construction Industry Council and the Vocational Training Council, etc.), having regard to the situation of the local employment market, to provide over 40 vocational training courses with more than 1 400 full-time and part-time training places for lawfully residing adult PICs who are due for discharge within 24 months and eligible for employment to enrol on a voluntary basis and obtain recognised qualifications after taking relevant examinations, thereby enhancing their employability and helping them enrol in bridging or progressive courses in the future, with a view to facilitating their re-integration into society after release. These courses cover a wide range of industries such as construction, engineering, business, food and beverage, retail, beauty care, transport, logistics, apparel, information technology application and environmental services, etc.

As for young PICs, CSD currently provides all young PICs with 13 half-day vocational

training courses covering commercial practice, creative multimedia technology, coffee house operations, Western pastry and dessert making, building services and beauty care, etc.

The above mixed operation mode has been adopted in vocational training for flexible deployment of internal resources and those of collaborating training bodies to meet the changing market needs, with a view to enhancing PICs' employability after release and providing them with opportunities for advanced vocational training. Therefore, the expenditure on vocational training courses is recorded on a yearly basis.

CSD's expenditures on vocational training and PICs' education in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2020-21 (Actual expenditure)	2021-22 (Actual expenditure)	2022-23 (Actual expenditure)	2023-24 (Actual expenditure)	2024-25 (Revised estimate)
Expenditure on vocational training courses (\$ million)	30.38	29.90	30.13	33.10	36.16
Expenditure on education (\$ million)	40.64	41.91	41.39	46.29	47.33

Since PICs' length of sentences vary and the participation of adult PICs in relevant courses is on a voluntary basis, the education and vocational training provided by correctional institutions are different. Therefore, CSD does not calculate or maintain statistics on the average education and vocational training cost per PIC in various types of institutions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB164

(Question Serial No. 3624)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list in the following table the monthly quantities of the following hygiene items provided to each person in custody (PIC):

Daily Commodity	Monthly Quantity Provided
Toilet paper	
Sanitary napkin (for female PICs only)	

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 152)

Reply:

The monthly quantities of hygiene items provided to each person in custody (PIC) are as follows:

Daily Commodity	Monthly Quantity Provided
Toilet paper	Given the different physical needs of male and female PICs, the Correctional Services Department provides each male PIC with 1 roll of toilet paper every 3 weeks, while each female PIC is provided with 2 rolls each month. PICs may request additional toilet paper from officers if necessary. Officers will arrange for distribution based on PICs' actual needs.
Sanitary napkin (for female PICs only)	Each female PIC is provided with 20 sanitary napkins each month. Female PICs may request additional sanitary napkins from officers if necessary. Officers will arrange for distribution based on PICs' actual needs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB165****(Question Serial No. 3625)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please provide a breakdown by the number of complaints received by correctional institutions, the category of complaints, the complainant, the content of complaints, the number of complaints entailing investigation, the number of complaints not entailing investigation, the number of substantiated complaints after investigation, the number of unsubstantiated complaints after investigation, and the number and rank of correctional officers subject to punishment for substantiated complaints after investigation in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:153)Reply:

In general, if the complaints lodged by persons in custody (PICs) involve matters of a relatively minor nature, such as the daily routines, general treatment or operation of an institution, the institutional management will take immediate follow-up actions.

As for complaints of a relatively serious nature, such as misconduct of staff or maladministration, the institutional management will refer them to the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of the Correctional Services Department for comprehensive investigation.

The numbers of complaint cases received from PICs and entailing comprehensive investigation by CIU in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Cases entailing comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)	2022 (Number of cases)	2023 (Number of cases)	2024 (Number of cases)
Use of unnecessary force	21	16	9	7	13
Misconduct of staff	49	34	30	28	14
Negligence of duty	40	25	18	14	7
Abuse of authority	19	12	5	11	19

Cases entailing comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)	2022 (Number of cases)	2023 (Number of cases)	2024 (Number of cases)
Injustice in disciplinary action	28	28	14	12	6
Dissatisfaction with institutional policy/procedure	9	0	0	0	0
Total	166	115	76	72	59

The numbers of complaint cases received from PICs which were found substantiated/partly substantiated after comprehensive investigation by CIU in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Cases substantiated/partly substantiated after comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)	2022 (Number of cases)	2023 (Number of cases)	2024 (Number of cases)
Substantiated	4	1	0	0	1
Substantiated other than reported	1	2	0	2	2
Not fully substantiated	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	3	0	2	3

A total of 2 Assistant Officers were subject to punishment for involvement in the substantiated/partly substantiated cases listed above in the past 5 years.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB166

(Question Serial No. 3626)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What is the number of correctional officers in the establishment of the Complaints Investigation Unit of the Correctional Services Department? What is the average time required for completing an investigation of a complaint? Is the manpower sufficient for handling the complaints?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:154)

Reply:

The Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. It is an investigation unit responsible for handling and investigating complaints, and its operation is independent of other sections of the Department. There are 15 staff members in the establishment of CIU, including 3 civilian staff.

CIU will complete an investigation within 18 weeks from the date of receiving a complaint. The findings will be submitted to the Correctional Services Department Complaints Committee (CSDCC) for review and decision-making. If necessary, CSDCC may refer the case back to CIU for investigation or make recommendations to the Department for the improvement of services. In 2024, the average time for CIU to complete a complaint investigation was 13.3 weeks.

CSD will review the establishment and manpower deployment of CIU from time to time, and make corresponding adjustment having regard to actual circumstances.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB167

(Question Serial No. 3627)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the number and content of programmes currently offered in rehabilitation centres. Are persons in custody (PICs) who are tertiary students provided with post-secondary programmes? If no, what is the content of the programmes provided to these PICs?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 155)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides half-day compulsory education for young persons in custody (PICs) aged between 14 and 20, and arranges for qualified teachers to teach the subjects. Having regard to the length of sentences and learning needs of young PICs, CSD provides young PICs undergoing training at rehabilitation centres with the "Teen's Programme", which includes 120 hours of basic education curriculum at the junior secondary school level (with subjects including Chinese, English, Mathematics as well as Citizenship, Economics and Society) and 180 hours of vocational training. The programme is recognised by the Vocational Training Council.

CSD also provides young PICs with courses at the secondary school level. PICs who were studying post-secondary programmes before imprisonment may contact their tertiary institutions for suitable modes of study and learning materials. CSD would assist PICs upon their requests to continue to study the relevant programmes at correctional institutions. PICs may also enrol in distance learning courses offered by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University according to their interests and abilities. Correctional institutions would provide appropriate assistance to them.

CSD has earlier signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University and 8 University Grants Committee-funded universities respectively to provide more comprehensive support for PICs, including credit transfers, with a view to assisting them to continue their studies after release.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB168

(Question Serial No. 3628)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide a breakdown by average working hours, longest working hours, standard earnings and overtime earnings for each type of work engaged by persons in custody in various correctional facilities in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 156)

Reply:

According to Rule 38 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), all convicted adult persons in custody (PICs) are required to engage in work (unless they have been certified by the Medical Officer seconded to the Correctional Services Department (CSD) as unfit for work on medical grounds). According to Rule 43 of the Prison Rules, PICs' hours of labour shall not be less than 6 nor more than 10 daily, exclusive of meals.

CSD does not maintain any statistics on the average or the longest working hours of PICs who have engaged in different types of work. A PIC who works and a PIC who, through no fault of his/her own, is unable to work, and an unconvicted person on remand who elects to engage in the service or industries of the prison in accordance with Rule 39 and Rule 201 of the Prison Rules respectively, may receive payment in accordance with rates approved by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. The earning rates are calculated on the basis of the earnings per week (see **Table**).

If overtime work by PICs is necessary for meeting operational needs, CSD will arrange for PICs to work overtime on a voluntary basis and they will be compensated with overtime earnings (i.e. 1.5 times of earnings).

Earnings Scheme for PICs
Earnings per week for adult PICs (effective from 1 October 2024)

Earnings per week

Rate scale	Earning grade	(HK\$)
Basic rate#	-	31.36
Apprentice	A	59.12
	B	70.01
	C	79.64
	D	101.37
	E	122.84
	F	143.64
Skilled	A	84.85
	B	105.98
	C	127.13
	D	169.09
	E	212.03
	F	254.60

PICs who are unable to work due to medical reasons, or newly convicted persons who are undergoing an induction programme and have not yet been assigned work are eligible for the basic earning grade.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB169

(Question Serial No. 3629)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mandatory for persons in custody to keep savings to meet their living expenses after release. What were the average and median savings in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 157)

Reply:

Adult persons in custody (PICs) are required to save 10% of their earnings until the mandatory savings of \$500 are made. After meeting the above requirement, PICs may save their remaining earnings or spend them on purchasing canteen items (e.g. snacks and additional daily commodities, etc.). The Correctional Services Department does not maintain statistics on PICs' savings made from their earnings.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB170

(Question Serial No. 3630)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In the past 5 years, what were the numbers of work injuries sustained by persons in custody (PICs) in various correctional facilities? What were the average and median amount of compensation for work injuries? What were the degrees of recovery of work injuries after assessment? Are there any guidelines to follow? How does the Department ensure PICs comply with the occupational safety and health requirements while they are at work?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:158)

Reply:

Statistics of persons in custody (PICs) rendered unfit for work for 4 or more days due to injuries arising from work accidents in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of accidents
2024	6
2023	7
2022	12
2021	8
2020	4

According to Rule 38 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), all convicted adult PICs are required to engage in work (unless they have been certified by the Medical Officers seconded to the Correctional Services Department (CSD) as unfit to work on medical grounds). CSD does not have an employer-employee relationship with PICs, and daily necessities and medical services are provided to PICs by the Government. If PICs sustain a certain degree of permanent disability or die due to injuries sustained at work while serving their sentences, the PICs or their representatives may apply to CSD for an ex-gratia payment. All eligible cases are handled and approved under the established mechanism.

In the past 5 years, there was 1 case where a PIC was granted an ex-gratia payment of \$20,000

for work injuries. However, the claimant did not collect the payment and instead filed a civil claim against CSD. Both parties eventually reached a settlement with a payment of \$100,000.

CSD has formulated a safety management system and associated guidelines in accordance with the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59), the Code of Practice on Safety Management issued by the Commissioner for Labour under that Ordinance, as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509). These include the establishment of the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Steering Committee, the setting up of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and appointment of Occupational Safety and Health Officers in correctional institutions, regular safety audits conducted for correctional institutions, risk assessment of workplaces and work procedures, as well as the provision of training and personal protective equipment to all PICs who engage in work, etc.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB171

(Question Serial No. 3631)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list the numbers of persons in custody kept in special cells (e.g. single cells), distribution of length of confinement (e.g. 7 days, 14 days, 21 days and 28 days) and reasons for the confinement in various correctional institutions and prisons in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 159)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment. In accordance with the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), CSD is empowered to impose separate confinement as punishment on persons in custody (PICs) who have committed offences against prison discipline, and to order the removal of PICs from association if the Department has reasonable grounds for believing that it is desirable to do so for the maintenance of good order or discipline or in the interests of PICs. PICs can also apply on their own initiative for removal from association with other PICs in view of their own circumstances such as special criminal background.

The numbers of cases involving PICs being removed from association, distribution of length of removal from association and the numbers of disciplinary cases involving PICs being imposed separate confinement as punishment in the past 5 years are tabulated below (as at 31 December of the year):

Year	Distribution of length of removal from association				Total number of cases involving PICs being removed from association (Note 1)	Disciplinary cases involving PICs being imposed separate confinement as punishment (Note 2)
	Under 72 hours	72 hours to 1 month	1 month to not longer than 4 months	Above 4 months		
2024	150(27)	362(43)	339(57)	28(28)	879	5 303
2023	135(21)	292(23)	227(23)	33(33)	687	4 395
2022	174(31)	220(42)	202(27)	53(53)	649	3 801
2021	445(68)	284(82)	256(37)	52(51)	1 037	4 307
2020	389(15)	187(27)	158(29)	33(33)	767	3 562

() Cases involving PICs applying for removal from association on their own initiative.

Note 1: Over 80% of the cases involved PICs being removed from association as a security measure to maintain institutional discipline and order or when the PICs were suspected of having internal concealment of dangerous drugs. As for the remaining cases, the PICs applied on their own initiative for removal from association in view of their own circumstances (such as special criminal background).

Note 2: In accordance with Rule 63 of the Prison Rules, separate confinement for any period shall not exceed 28 days.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB172

(Question Serial No. 3632)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of expenditure on the arrangement of separate confinement for persons in custody.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 160)

Reply:

As the management of persons in custody under separate confinement is part of the daily management work of the Correctional Services Department, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure incurred.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB173****(Question Serial No. 3633)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please provide the respective numbers of “individual acts of indiscipline” and “concerted acts of indiscipline” in the past 5 years. What were the losses and expenditures involved? Please list the causes of the above cases of acts of indiscipline and the ways these cases were handled by the Department.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 161)Reply:

The respective numbers of individual acts of indiscipline and concerted acts of indiscipline of persons in custody (PICs) in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Individual acts of indiscipline (No. of acts of indiscipline)	Concerted acts of indiscipline (No. of cases)
2024	6 393	5
2023	5 335	4
2022	4 564	5
2021	5 269	8
2020	4 332	10

Since the handling of acts of indiscipline forms part of the daily management work of the Correctional Services Department (CSD), the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved. Besides, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the losses incurred due to acts of indiscipline of PICs.

The causes of acts of indiscipline of individual PICs vary, and CSD does not maintain any statistics in this regard. For cases of concerted acts of indiscipline, most of the PICs involved had triad backgrounds, records of drug abuse or repeated imprisonment. They usually incited other PICs to get involved in collective actions or fighting in an attempt to establish their sphere of influence or resist the management measures or actions taken by the management to combat illicit activities.

CSD handles acts of indiscipline of PICs in accordance with the established mechanism. Apart from continuously strengthening intelligence collection and conducting special search operations to ensure that all illicit activities are nipped in the bud, CSD also tackles illicit or indiscipline acts decisively and promptly so as to prevent situations from deteriorating. CSD may take disciplinary actions against the persons involved or report the cases to the Police for follow-up, having regard to the nature and gravity of the cases. CSD may also order individual PICs involved to be removed from association in accordance with the law for the maintenance of good order and discipline in the institutions. Besides, in case an emergency incident occurs in a correctional facility, the Regional Response Team will arrive at the institution promptly to provide immediate tactical support to the institutional management in a bid to bring the situation under control and prevent it from deteriorating.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB174

(Question Serial No. 3634)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The average meal expenses per meal per person for ethnic Chinese persons in custody (PICs), and a breakdown by types of food. The average meal expenses per meal per person for non-ethnic Chinese PICs, and a breakdown by types of food. Please provide the average meal expenses per meal per person provided by the Correctional Services Department to correctional officers during work hours, and a breakdown by types of food.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 162)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) attaches great importance to racial equality. No persons in custody (PICs) will be treated differently with regard to their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, including meal arrangements for PICs. Hence, CSD does not have the relevant information on meal expenses of PICs of individual ethnic groups. In accordance with Section 24A of the Prisons Ordinance (Cap. 234), CSD provides PICs with plain and wholesome food. The variety and portion of dietary scales (the 4 main dietary scales including local staple rice diet, diet of curries and chapatti, diet of bread and potatoes, and vegetarian diet) currently provided by CSD are designed by dietitians and approved by the Department of Health. The scales meet the nutritional needs of PICs. Non-vegetarian PICs are provided with an appropriate amount of meat in their daily meals. The types of meat include pork, beef, fish, skinless chicken, chicken wings, etc. Prices of all dietary scales are more or less the same. The average cost of food material per day per person is about \$36.8.

In accordance with the Civil Service Regulations, an officer who is on duty for a continuous period of 12 hours or more in any period of 24 hours may receive a local subsistence allowance. In general, the duty hours of CSD staff do not meet this requirement. Therefore, the Department does not have relevant statistics on the average expenditure on subsistence allowance per staff per day.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB175

(Question Serial No. 3635)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list the numbers of persons with disabilities in various correctional institutions in the past 5 years and currently by the types of disabilities. Please inform this Committee of the arrangements for the provision of care and necessary treatments made for persons with disabilities serving their sentences in prisons, and provide a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 163)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides basic medical care services to all persons in custody (PICs), including setting up hospitals in correctional institutions where medical examinations and appropriate treatments or referrals are provided to newly admitted PICs by Medical Officers (MOs) seconded from the Department of Health and correctional officers with nursing qualifications. CSD will also arrange for PICs to serve their sentences at appropriate correctional institutions and provide PICs with appropriate health care, attention and necessary treatments, taking into account the advice of MOs.

CSD also cares for the special needs of PICs with disabilities. For instance, CSD organises sign language courses in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to enhance frontline correctional officers' communication skills with and understanding of PICs with hearing impairment. In addition, CSD will, having regard to the circumstances of individual PICs with hearing impairment, engage part-time sign language interpreters or seek assistance from non-governmental organisations to arrange sign language interpretation service for those PICs in need. Besides, to cater for the needs of persons with visual impairment, a braille information booklet for PICs is available at all correctional institutions.

Since the caring of PICs with disabilities forms part of the daily management work of CSD, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

According to the annual penal population survey conducted by CSD, a breakdown of the numbers of persons with disabilities serving sentences by the type of disabilities in the past 5

years is tabulated below (since the penal population survey for 2024-25 has yet to be conducted, CSD does not have the relevant statistics):

Year (As at 31 March)	Persons with mental disabilities or mental illness	Persons with physical disabilities	Total
2023-24	167	87	254
2022-23	474	106	580
2021-22	229	125	354
2020-21	79	135	214
2019-20	78	95	173

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB176

(Question Serial No. 3636)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the numbers of transgender persons (transgender males and females) and persons with disabilities in various correctional institutions currently and in the past 5 years. Please inform this Committee of the arrangements for the provision of care and necessary treatments made for persons with disabilities serving their sentences in prison, and provide a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:164)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides basic medical care services to all persons in custody (PICs), including setting up hospitals in correctional institutions where medical examinations and appropriate treatments or referrals are provided to newly admitted PICs by Medical Officers (MOs) seconded from the Department of Health and correctional officers with nursing qualifications. CSD will also arrange for PICs to serve their sentences at appropriate correctional institutions and provide PICs with appropriate health care, attention and necessary treatments, taking into account the advice of MOs.

CSD also cares for the special needs of PICs with disabilities. For instance, CSD organises sign language courses in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to enhance frontline correctional officers' communication skills with and understanding of PICs with hearing impairment. In addition, CSD will, having regard to the circumstances of individual PICs with hearing impairment, engage part-time sign language interpreters or seek assistance from non-governmental organisations to arrange sign language interpretation service for those PICs in need. Besides, to cater for the needs of persons with visual impairment, a braille information booklet for PICs is available at all correctional institutions.

Since the caring of PICs with disabilities forms part of the daily management work of CSD, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

According to the annual penal population survey conducted by CSD, a breakdown of the numbers of persons with disabilities serving sentences by the type of disabilities in the past 5 years is tabulated below (since the penal population survey for 2024-25 has yet to be conducted, CSD does not have the relevant statistics):

Year (As at 31 March)	Persons with mental disabilities or mental illness	Persons with physical disabilities	Total
2023-24	167	87	254
2022-23	474	106	580
2021-22	229	125	354
2020-21	79	135	214
2019-20	78	95	173

As for transgender persons, a total of 64 transgender persons were admitted to correctional institutions from 2020 to 2024, of which 2 cases involved female-to-male transgender persons.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB177

(Question Serial No. 3637)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the numbers of new books acquired for the libraries of various correctional institutions and the expenditures involved in each of the past 5 years. How are these books distributed by category? What are the criteria for book selection and procurement? What officers on establishment are responsible for this matter? What are the guidelines for compliance? Have the libraries provided appropriate books to persons in custody of other nationalities who are illiterate in English or Chinese?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:165)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) encourages persons in custody (PICs) to cultivate an interest in and spend their leisure time on reading. Therefore, libraries have been set up in various correctional institutions to provide PICs with books of different types and in different languages. The total collections of the libraries in correctional institutions currently extend to over 120 000 copies. In the past 5 years, CSD incurred an average annual expenditure of about \$72,000 on the acquisition of new books for the libraries in various correctional institutions, and the average number of new books acquired every year was about 1 000 copies.

Staff members of the Education Unit of CSD are responsible for the acquisition of appropriate books for the libraries in accordance with the established procurement procedures, having regard to factors such as reading interests and learning needs of PICs. CSD does not maintain a breakdown of books by category. In addition, CSD borrows books from the Hong Kong Public Libraries to facilitate loans by PICs, replaces the borrowed books in batches on a regular basis and also receives books donated by outside organisations or individuals according to the established mechanism.

CSD has been making its best endeavours to increase the number of books in foreign languages. At present, books kept in the libraries of various correctional institutions are in about 40 different languages. In addition to books in the Chinese and English languages,

CSD has acquired about 3 000 books in other languages over the past 5 years for reading by PICs of other nationalities who are illiterate in English and Chinese. The distribution of books by language is tabulated below:

Book	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Traditional Chinese	85 851	69%
Simplified Chinese	7 606	6%
English	14 400	12%
Other languages (Note)	16 278	13%
Total	124 135	100%

Note: Not less than 40 different languages, e.g. Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, Korean, Spanish, French, Hindi, Urdu, etc.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB178

(Question Serial No. 3638)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list the prices of various canteen items in correctional institutions. By comparing the current basic level of earnings of persons in custody (PICs) with the prices of canteen items, what is the percentage of earnings spent on purchasing basic necessities by PICs? How often are the prices of canteen items in correctional institutions reviewed? What criteria are made reference to?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 166)

Reply:

The canteen items currently available for purchase by persons in custody (PICs) and their prices are listed in **Table**.

PICs may save their earnings or use them to purchase canteen items. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) does not maintain the relevant figures on the percentage of earnings PICs spent on purchasing canteen items.

Canteen items are procured through an open tender exercise. CSD will deduct the payment of the items ordered by individual PICs from the balance of their earnings according to the supplier's contract prices. The prices of various types of canteen items will be subject to review every time CSD arranges for a new contract or whenever it is deemed necessary.

Table

Canteen items available for purchase by PICs					
Item	Description	Price (HK\$)	Item	Description	Price (HK\$)
1	Curry Beef Cube	10.51	39	Pencil	1.30
2	BBQ Fried Dough	11.52	40	Exercise Book	2.25
3	Dried Shredded Cuttlefish	8.20	41	Envelope (5 pieces)	1.80
4	Dried Pork	8.91	42	Writing Paper (10 sheets)	3.10
5	Salted Fried Peanuts	3.84	43	Skin Lotion/Cream	30.70
6	Nam Yue Peanuts	4.50	44	Lip Balm	15.20
7	Mixed Nuts	3.11	45	Baby Powder	22.25
8	Fried Broad Beans	8.51	46	Baby Oil	30.40
9	Corn Flakes	5.70	47	Shampoo (400 ml)	26.80
10	Preserved Mandarin Orange Peel	6.42	48	Shampoo (200 ml)	30.80
11	Liquoriced Red Ginger	2.80	49	Hair Conditioner	28.40
12	Cream Sandwich Biscuits- Chocolate flavour	3.25	50	Plastic Hair Comb	2.50
13	Cream Sandwich Biscuits- Peanut flavour	3.25	51	Plastic Soap Box	10.20
14	Vegetable Biscuits	13.60	52	Toilet Soap	6.44
15	Cream Wafers-Coconut flavour	9.20	53	Toothpaste	20.65
16	Sesame Crackers/Soda Biscuits	5.50	54	Desensitising Toothpaste	41.91
17	Crisp Biscuits- Orange or lemon flavour	15.51	55	Tooth Brush (Soft)	9.80
18	Saltine Soda Biscuits	8.80	56	Tooth Brush (Ultra Soft)	14.50
19	Digestive Biscuits	17.20	57	Facial Towel	6.40
20	Spring Onion Crackers	18.80	58	Tissue Paper	5.85
21	Calcium Crackers	15.60	59	Hair Brush	10.00
22	BBQ Flavoured Potato Chips	3.40	60	Plastic Hair Clip (2 pieces)	9.40
23	Cheese Flavoured Snacks	1.70	61	Sanitary Napkins (10 pieces)	24.60
24	Shrimp Sticks	3.43	62	Ear Plugs (1 pair)	19.50
25	Glucose Lemon Flavoured Candies	10.50	63	Double-wall Plastic Cup with Lid	31.50
26	Dairy Chocolate Bar	12.85	64	Battery (AA) (2 pieces)	6.20
27	Peanut Chocolate Beans	10.73	65	Battery (AAA) (2 pieces)	6.20
28	Fruit Chewy Soft Candies with Vitamins	13.22	66	Photo Album (4R)	14.60
29	Haw Flakes	6.86	67	Stamps(\$2.2x1+\$0.5x1+\$0.2x2+\$0.1x1)	3.20
30	Soya Bean Drink	2.75	68	Aerogrammes (2 pieces)	7.40
31	Malt Soya Bean Drink	3.75	69	Cigarettes (Gentori)	82.45
32	Orange Drink	3.00	70	Cigarettes (Wealth)	86.45
33	Sugar Cane Drink	2.75	71	Deodorant	27.72

Canteen items available for purchase by PICs					
Item	Description	Price (HK\$)	Item	Description	Price (HK\$)
34	Chrysanthemum Tea	2.75	72	Mosquito Repellent Patches	28.90
35	Lemon Tea	3.00	73	Oat Crackers	12.42
36	High Calcium Low Fat Milk	5.50	74	Hi-calcium Soya Drink – Original flavour	5.50
37	Plastic Ruler	4.60	75	Body Wash	37.50
38	Ball Pen (blue)	3.75	76	Panty Liners (40 pieces)	17.20

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB179

(Question Serial No. 3639)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of expenditure on warm clothing for each person in custody in various correctional institutions in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:167)

Reply:

The actual expenditures of the Correctional Services Department on clothing and bedding (including blankets) for persons in custody in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Expenditure on clothing (\$ million)	14.01	14.74	13.41	13.43	14.73
Expenditure on bedding (\$ million)	2.60	3.12	2.43	1.55	3.13
Total expenditure (\$ million)	16.61	17.86	15.84	14.98	17.86

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB180

(Question Serial No. 3640)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list the recorded numbers of cases in which frontline officers used “necessary force” in various prisons and correctional institutions in the past 5 years. What were the reasons for using “necessary force”? Please provide a breakdown with explanation. Please list the recorded numbers of persons in custody and staff members injured due to the use of “necessary force” in various prisons in the past 5 years. Please list the auxiliary equipment made use of when using “necessary force”. What was the expenditure involved? Please provide a breakdown with explanation.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 168)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc. The numbers of cases in which correctional officers used necessary force against PICs and the numbers of persons injured in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases involving the use of necessary force	Number of PICs injured	Number of correctional officers injured
2024	67	80	23
2023	78	98	25
2022	77	80	23
2021	101	123	18
2020	91	117	14

Correctional officers are generally equipped with oleoresin capsicum foam and extendable truncheons during supervision of PICs. Since the information about the expenditure on and the quantity of the relevant equipment procured by CSD involves its operational deployment details, it is not appropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB181

(Question Serial No. 3641)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Are frontline officers provided with training and guidelines on the use of necessary force on persons in custody (PICs) at "B Hall" of Pik Uk Correctional Institution (PUCI)? In what circumstances will force be used on young offenders? If correctional officers consider necessary force should be used, how can they ensure that no excess injury will be caused to the subdued PICs? What types of auxiliary equipment or weapons are provided to frontline officers at "B Hall" of PUCI to prevent PICs from committing acts of indiscipline? What are the specific contents of the guidelines on the use of necessary force on PICs for frontline officers? How can the Correctional Services Department (CSD) ensure that correctional officers will not abuse their power? Are PICs informed of the possibility of being applied necessary force by staff members of CSD when they are admitted into prisons? And are they informed of their rights concerned? What is the average cost of each use of necessary force to subdue PICs?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 169)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed. The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc.

Every correctional officer is required to receive professional tactics, self-defense and scenario training to learn how to use different types of equipment and how to respond in emergency situations. CSD also provides training and organises drills for correctional officers from

time to time to ensure that they are familiar with the requirements and procedures for the use of necessary force. Correctional officers are generally equipped with oleoresin capsicum foam and extendable truncheons during supervision of PICs.

The departmental guidelines stipulate that, except in extreme emergency situations, correctional officers shall give a warning to PICs, express the intention to use force, and state clearly the nature and degree of force intended to be used before the application of force. The PICs concerned shall be given every opportunity to obey orders before any use of force. In most cases, the situations at the scene should allow correctional officers to handle resistance of PICs first by verbal advice and counselling. If the resistance persists or is even raised to a higher level, correctional officers may use appropriate force after making a professional judgement based on the actual circumstances at the scene in that particular time, the level of resistance of PICs, the abilities of the correctional officers themselves and the threats faced.

All PICs newly admitted into correctional institutions will be arranged to undergo an induction programme, during which the staff will explain to them their rights. In addition, through the Information Booklet for Persons in Custody issued to them and the electronic kiosks located at different places in the institutions, they can obtain detailed information about their rights. PICs who feel aggrieved may lodge complaints or air their grievances through various internal and external channels.

As maintaining institutional order and handling emergencies are part of the daily duties of correctional officers, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure incurred.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB182

(Question Serial No. 3642)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list the recorded numbers of cases in which frontline officers used “necessary force” in various correctional institutions for young offenders aged under 21 in the past 5 years, and also the recorded numbers of young offenders aged under 21 and staff members injured due to the use of “necessary force” in various prisons in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:170)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc. The numbers of cases in which correctional officers used necessary force against young PICs and the numbers of persons injured in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases involving the use of necessary force	Number of young PICs injured	Number of correctional officers injured
2024	4	6	4
2023	2	2	0
2022	3	2	1
2021	12	23	7
2020	4	3	2

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB183

(Question Serial No. 3643)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily. Please list the records of non-compliant correctional staff using force unnecessarily with a breakdown. If there are no such records, what are the reasons? Are the existing closed circuit television (CCTV) systems and complaints mechanism effective enough to deter staff members from using force unnecessarily? How can the Department prove their effectiveness? What is the total expenditure on CCTV systems incurred by the Department? How many CCTVs are installed in each institution? What is the average cost of each CCTV?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:171)

Reply:

In the past 5 years (2020-2024), there was no recorded case of staff using force unnecessarily in the Correctional Services Department (CSD).

At present, a total of about 9 900 closed circuit televisions (CCTV) are installed in correctional institutions. CSD is extending the coverage of CCTV systems in institutions gradually so as to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring, function for combating and preventing indiscipline acts and illicit activities in institutions, and also protecting the safety of correctional officers in the course of law enforcement and ensuring the safety of persons in custody (PICs).

Besides, CSD all along attaches great importance to complaints lodged by any persons, regardless of whether they are PICs or discharged persons. If aggrieved by any treatment they have received, they may lodge complaints or air their grievances through various internal or external channels.

Internal channels include complaining to the institutional management, directorate officers of the CSD Headquarters during their inspections to correctional institutions or the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of CSD. CIU will carry out an investigation of each and every

complaint in a fair, impartial and comprehensive manner, or make a referral to other law enforcement agencies for follow-up actions having regard to the circumstances of the case.

As for external channels, PICs may write to Members of the Legislative Council, The Ombudsman, statutory bodies, other law enforcement agencies or government bureaux, etc. to lodge their complaints. Besides, they may choose to seek assistance from or lodge their complaints with the visiting Justices of the Peace (JPs) directly during the latter's surprise visits to their institutions and request the JPs to meet them alone.

The Office of The Ombudsman (the Office), as an independent and statutory organisation for handling complaints against government departments, can initiate independent investigation into the complaints. If necessary, the Office may request CSD to assist in the investigation by providing information (such as CCTV footage), or even conduct site inspections and interview the complainants.

PICs have the right to see their legal advisors. Staff members of CSD will not be present at their interviews, and thus will not know the contents of such interviews.

CSD also reviews and enhances the complaints handling mechanism from time to time with a view to increasing the transparency and credibility of the Department in handling complaints in an open, fair and impartial manner.

The Correctional Services Department Complaints Appeal Board (CSDCAB) provides an appeal channel for complainants who are dissatisfied with the investigation results of CIU. In 2024, the number of members of CSDCAB was 29. Apart from JPs, religious persons who are acquainted with correctional operations were also appointed. The independence of CSDCAB ensures that appeal cases are handled fairly.

CSD adopts a zero tolerance policy against violations of regulations by its staff. As a disciplinary force, CSD demands strict discipline. The conduct of individual staff members is monitored by supervisory staff at different levels. If any indiscipline act of a staff member is confirmed, CSD will take disciplinary action against the staff member concerned. If it is suspected that illegal acts are committed, CSD will refer those cases to other law enforcement agencies for follow-up actions.

As mentioned above, about 9 900 CCTVs are installed in correctional institutions. The average cost of each CCTV in correctional institutions varies owing to differences in location, year of completion, building structures, design of institutions and time of installation and update of CCTV systems, and thus it cannot be generalised.

The project estimates for replacement and enhancement of the CCTV systems currently in progress are tabulated as follows:

	Correctional Facility	Head/Subhead	Number of CCTVs upon completion of installation	Project Estimate/ Commitment (\$ million)
1	Stanley Prison	Head 708 Capital Subventions and Major Systems and Equipment	2 493	162.680
2	Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre		1 067	51.546
3	Tong Fuk Correctional Institution	Head 30 Correctional Services Department Subhead 603 Plant, vehicles and equipment	690	35.274
4	Pik Uk Prison		569	37.409
5	Cape Collinson Correctional Institution		302	55.450
6	Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre		580	98.701
7	Hei Ling Chau Correctional Institution		514	108.211
8	Lai Sun Correctional Institution		236	40.944
9	Pik Uk Correctional Institution		577	13.507
10	Lo Wu Correctional Institution		3 618	241.331
11	Lai King Correctional Institution/Chi Lan Rehabilitation Centre		451	54.489
12	Shek Pik Prison		1 441	119.995
13	Sha Tsui Correctional Institution/Lai Chi Rehabilitation Centre		489	38.069
14	Nei Kwu Correctional Institution		382	30.967

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB184

(Question Serial No. 3644)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the records of cases in which correctional officers subdued persons in custody (PICs) with empty hands, or with the use of oleoresin capsicum foam or extendable truncheon in various prisons and correctional institutions in the past 5 years. How many records mentioned above involved female PICs, young offenders and PICs over the age of 65?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.:172)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The numbers of cases involving the use of necessary force against PICs by correctional officers in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases by type of necessary force used			Total
	Empty-hand control	Use of oleoresin capsicum foam	Empty-hand control and use of oleoresin capsicum foam	
2024	4	10	53	67
2023	8	4	66	78
2022	8	7	62	77
2021	12	5	84	101
2020	14	9	68	91

Note: In the past 5 years, no correctional officers used extendable truncheons on PICs.

CSD does not maintain a breakdown of cases involving the use of necessary force by correctional officers on PICs by age. The numbers of cases involving institutions for young PICs and female PICs respectively in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of Cases Involving Institutions for Young PICs	Number of Cases Involving Institutions for Female PICs
2024	4	14
2023	2	17
2022	3	22
2021	12	24
2020	4	20

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB185

(Question Serial No. 3384)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Regarding the monitoring of taxi services, please provide this Committee with the following information:

1. The total number of reported cases received by the Police in 2024 involving soliciting passengers, refusing hire, overcharging and taximeter offences;
2. Of the above cases, the number that were accepted for investigation and the number that resulted in prosecutions; and
3. The plans and measures to strengthen enforcement efforts.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 48)

Reply:

1. The number of complaints about taxis received by the Police Force in 2024 is tabulated as follows:

Overcharging	1 080
Refusing or neglecting to accept a hire	1 285
Refusing or neglecting to drive a taxi to a place indicated by the hirer	161
Driving to a destination other than by the most direct practicable route (commonly known as "taking a detour")	1 408
Irregularities involving taximeters	24
Others (Note)	7625
Total	11 583

Note: Other complaints include taxi drivers not behaving in a civil and orderly manner, as well as soliciting passengers.

2. The number of enforcement actions (i.e. the numbers of summonses issued and arrests made) taken by the Force against offences committed by taxi drivers in 2024 is tabulated as follows:

Overcharging	25
Refusing or neglecting to accept a hire	68
Refusing or neglecting to drive a taxi to a place indicated by the hirer	19
Driving to a destination other than by the most direct practicable route (commonly known as “taking a detour”)	20
Irregularities involving taximeters	38
Others (Note)	454
Total	624

Note: Other enforcement actions include those against taxi drivers for not behaving in a civil or orderly manner, as well as soliciting passengers. The figures above do not include enforcement actions against taxi drivers for offences related to improper driving behaviour (e.g. careless driving, speeding, etc.)

3. The Force has implemented various effective measures to address the illegal behaviour of taxi drivers. These measures include conducting intelligence-led operations, enforcing the law through “decoy operations” (where officers disguise themselves as passengers) and enhancing publicity. The Force will continue to conduct targeted enforcement actions based on intelligence and operational priorities to address the misconduct of the minority of taxi drivers who tarnish the reputation of the trade, thereby achieving a deterrent effect.

In parallel, the Force closely monitors and follows up on complaints regarding alleged unlawful behaviour by taxi drivers. Members of the public who suspect a taxi driver of committing offences, such as refusing to accept a hire or overcharging, are encouraged to record relevant details, including the driver’s name, the taxi’s vehicle registration number, the time and the location, before reporting the matter to the Force. If evidence suffices, the Force will take enforcement action without hesitation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB186

(Question Serial No. 3393)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Regarding the road safety issues of cyclists, will the Government inform this Committee of the following for the past 3 years:

- (1) The numbers of complaints and prosecutions related to cycling offences, as well as the number of traffic accidents involving bicycles and the resulting casualties each year;
- (2) The progress of work on implementing the requirement for cyclists to wear helmets;
- (3) The current number of electric mobility devices in Hong Kong and the number of offences related to their use; and
- (4) The plans and measures to strengthen enforcement in relation to these issues.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 57)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers of prosecutions related to cycling offences, traffic accidents involving bicycles and the resulting casualties for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of summonses issued for cycling offences	5 818	4 083	3 797
Number of traffic accidents involving bicycles	2 224	1 980	1 868 (Note)
Casualties resulted from traffic accidents involving bicycles	2 310	2 051	1 952 (Note)

(Note): Figures are provisional as the Police Force is still processing the traffic accident statistics for 2024.

The Force does not maintain statistics on the number of complaints related to cycling offences.

- (2) The Government is studying legislative amendments to introduce the mandatory requirement for cyclists to wear helmets, and will submit the legislative amendment proposal to the Legislative Council as soon as possible. The Transport Department (TD) has noted that legal requirements vary across different places, including whether helmets should be required in all locations or only in designated areas, as well as the applicable age. In addition, the Government has received suggestions from various local stakeholders regarding the applicable locations and scope of the mandatory requirement to wear bicycle helmets. The Government is currently conducting a careful study and analysis of the collected information and views to refine the legislative amendment proposal.
- (3) Neither the Force nor the TD has maintained statistics on the current number of electric mobility devices in Hong Kong.

The number of persons arrested by the Force for illegal use of electric mobility devices for the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

2022	2023	2024
236	267	647

- (4) Road safety is one of the Force's operational priorities, while combatting the illegal use of electric mobility devices and cycling offences are among the Force's Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities. The Force will continue to launch operations from time to time to take stringent enforcement actions against the illegal use of electric mobility devices and careless cycling to ensure road safety.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB187

(Question Serial No. 3903)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

In regard to the electronic traffic enforcement regime, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The extent to which the processing time for handling electronic notices issued to vehicle owners will be reduced following the implementation of electronic enforcement, as well as the savings in manpower costs for enforcement; and
2. Details regarding the implementation of the electronic enforcement system, including its maintenance costs, with particular emphasis on measures to prevent fraudulent activities and whether these measures will place additional pressure on officers.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

1. In support of the implementation of e-Ticketing, the Police Force will concurrently launch a new dedicated online portal and a mobile application for traffic e-enforcement. These online platforms will provide a convenient means for vehicle owners and drivers to handle matters related to fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for traffic contraventions. Upon the launch of these initiatives, members of the public may settle fixed penalties using traditional methods (such as automated teller machines, Payment by Phone Service (PPS), postal services and post office counters) based on the information provided in their electronic notices. They may also verify and view these notices through the system and settle their penalties via electronic means (such as e-credit card payments and the Faster Payment System). These enhancements aim to deliver more convenient public services and align with the Government's policy direction of developing Hong Kong into a smart city.

With the full implementation of the Traffic e-Enforcement System (the System), the time required to process paper-based FPTs will be reduced, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the Force's traffic enforcement efforts and enabling more flexible deployment of manpower to other traffic management duties.

2. The estimated maintenance cost of the System for 2025-26 is \$65,425,000, which will primarily cover the maintenance of hardware and software, communications networks and data transmission. The Force will make effective use of resources in light of actual circumstances and demands to ensure the System's stable operation.

As part of the Force's anti-deception efforts, the System has been registered under the Short Message Service (SMS) Sender Registration Scheme administered by the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA). All SMS messages issued by the Force in relation to FPTs will display a sender ID prefixed with a “#” symbol, making it easier for the public to verify their authenticity and avoid falling victim to fraudulent messages. Furthermore, neither SMS messages nor emails issued in relation to FPTs will contain any hyperlinks. The Force also reminds members of the public not to click on any links embedded in purported FPT-related SMS messages or emails, in order to avoid potential scams.

Upon commissioning, the designated portal for processing FPTs will use a domain name ending in “.gov.hk”. The Force will remind members of the public to carefully verify the website's domain name and content. If there is any doubt about the source of the information, personal data should not be provided lightly, in order to safeguard one's own interests.

In addition, the Force will continue to strengthen its promotional and educational efforts and disseminate anti-deception messages through multiple channels, with the aim of reminding the public to stay vigilant and enhancing their awareness of fraud prevention. The Force also encourages members of the public to optimise the use of the 24-hour “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”, the “Scameter” tool and the “Scameter+” mobile app, and to report suspected scams proactively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB188

(Question Serial No. 3334)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The provision for 2025-26 is \$1,075.0 million (18.1%) higher than the revised estimate for the previous year. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for filling of vacancies, full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2024-25 and salary increments and increased cash flow requirements for the Government's territory-wide closed-circuit televisions installation at crime black spots and replacement of vessels, partly offset by a net decrease of 15 posts in 2025-26. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the details regarding the filling of the vacancies concerned and the net decrease of posts, including the respective post titles, ranks, duties and the payroll costs. Please also advise on the total expenditure incurred by the proposed creation of posts and the total expenditure saved by the proposed deletion of posts, as well as how the duty of maintaining public order and safety will be balanced in light of the reduced number of posts.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 53)

Reply:

In 2025-26, there will be a net decrease of 15 non-directorate posts under Programme (4) "Operations" (involving creation of 8 civilian posts, and reduction of 16 disciplined service posts and 7 civilian posts).

Details on the salaries of the 8 civilian posts to be created are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Total (civilian staff)	8	MPS 1 – 8	15,180 – 23,585

Details on the 16 disciplined service posts and 7 civilian posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2024)
Senior Superintendent	-1	PPS 54 – 54b	154,775 – 163,905
Superintendent	-1	PPS 50 – 53	132,365 – 148,775
Chief Inspector	-1	PPS 44 – 49	103,205 – 127,620
Senior Inspector/Inspector	-3	PPS 24 – 43	52,015 – 99,500
Station Sergeant	-1	PPS 24 – 33a	52,015 – 76,830
Sergeant	-6	PPS 17 – 28	42,390 – 60,850
Police Constable	-3	PPS 4 – 17	28,940 – 42,390
Total (police officers)	-16		
Total (civilian staff)	-7	MPS 1 – 10 MOD 0 – 8	15,180 – 26,590 15,175 – 17,880
Total	-23		

Through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes and efficiency enhancement, the Force regularly examines its staff establishment and makes flexible deployment in response to policing needs to meet the community's service demands. At the same time, the Force has formulated comprehensive human resources and strategic plans for staff training, career development, among others. Officers are encouraged to make self-advancement and strengthen their own professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. In general, policing services will not be affected by the reduction in establishment.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB189

(Question Serial No. 3763)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the illegal trans-boundary operations by Mainland oyster farmers at Deep Bay, please advise on:

- (a) the manpower currently deployed by the Government to patrol in the waters around Urmston Road, the numbers of patrols conducted and the division of work; and
- (b) the numbers of enforcement actions against illegal activities of Mainland oyster farmers and their effectiveness over the past 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25), as well as the penalties and fines imposed.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 53)

Reply:

- (a) The Deep Bay Sub-unit of Marine West Division of the Police Force is responsible for regular patrol and law enforcement in the waters at Deep Bay. The sub-unit currently has an establishment of 57 police officers, comprising 1 Inspector, 3 Station Sergeants, 16 Sergeants and 37 Police Constables, who are deployed to the Tsim Bei Tsui Marine Police Post, 2 Police barges and their respective patrol craft.

The numbers of “Anti-illegal Immigrant Operation” carried out by the Deep Bay Sub-unit and various Marine Police units in the waters at Deep Bay in 2022, 2023, 2024 and the first 2 months of 2025 are as follows:

Year	Number of operations
2022	322
2023	825
2024	585
2025 (as at 28 February 2025)	46

- (b) The numbers of Mainland illegal immigrants arrested by the Deep Bay Sub-unit and various Marine Police units in the waters at Deep Bay in 2022, 2023, 2024 and the first 2 months of 2025 are as follows:

Year	Number of persons arrested	Supplementary notes
2022	29	All illegal immigrants have been referred to the Immigration Department for action. No refusal notice (ID122) was issued to Mainland oyster farmers who were suspected of breaching the requirements.
2023	36	
2024	22	
2025 (as at 28 February 2025)	6	

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB190

(Question Serial No. 3777)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Not specified

Question:

Regarding efforts to combat absconding, please provide the following:

- (a) The number of persons arrested, convicted and currently wanted since the enactment of the National Security Law (NSL), with a breakdown by month; and
- (b) The most severe penalty imposed on those convicted of absconding since the enactment of the NSL, as well as the maximum and minimum penalties applicable to such cases.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 67)

Reply:

- (a) & (b) The National Security Department of the Police Force is a department established under Article 16 of the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL) for safeguarding national security; its duties form part of the work in safeguarding national security and do not fall under Head 122.

Safeguarding national security is the most important task of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government. Individuals endangering national security often abscond overseas to evade criminal liability, and continue to endanger national security through various means. Sections 89(1) and 89(4) of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance confer power upon the Secretary for Security, to specify by notices published in the Gazette, persons who are suspected of having committed offences endangering national security and absconded overseas, as well as the measures to be applied against the relevant absconders, depending on the situation and subject to certain conditions being fulfilled. These measures include prohibiting the provision of funds to, or dealing with the funds of, an absconder; suspending an absconder's qualification to practise, or the permission or registration required for operating businesses or employment; temporarily removing an absconder from holding the office of director of a company; and cancelling the absconder's HKSAR passport. The

specified measures aim at addressing, combating, deterring and preventing acts of abscondment, and procuring the return of absconded persons to Hong Kong to face law enforcement and judicial proceedings.

According to statistics provided by the Security Bureau, as at 1 March 2025, a total of 320 persons had been arrested on suspicion of engaging in acts or activities endangering national security under all relevant laws since the implementation of the NSL. Of these cases, 186 persons and 5 companies were prosecuted, with 161 persons and 1 company convicted, including cases where sentencing has been completed or is still pending.

Among the aforementioned figures concerning cases under all relevant laws, 91 persons and 4 companies were prosecuted for offences under the HKNSL, with 76 persons convicted. Meanwhile, 5 persons were prosecuted for offences under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, with 3 persons convicted.

Safeguarding national security is a top priority, and endangering national security is a serious offence. The breakdown of arrest figures and related details constitute information pertaining to the HKSAR's work on safeguarding national security and, therefore, cannot be disclosed.

The acts or activities endangering national security may lead to extremely serious consequences. The HKSAR Government has the responsibility to pursue the legal liabilities of the persons who have committed an offence under the NSL or other offences endangering national security outside the Region in accordance with the law.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB191

(Question Serial No. 3845)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 in Programme (1) that the Police Force would continue to identify and implement measures to ensure effective and flexible tasking of front-line officers to enhance supervision, deployment and distribution of workload. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of all Police Regions and the respective police stations in Hong Kong over the past 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25); and
- 2) whether resources have been deployed in a timely manner according to the population growth trends and the application of technology (e.g. the progress of CCTV installations) in various districts; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 64)

Reply:

- 1) The yearly distribution of the Police Force's establishment (as at 31 December), categorised by rank and region, is detailed in the appendices of the *Hong Kong Police Review*. For information on the staff establishment of all police districts in the territory for 2020 to 2023, please refer to the *Hong Kong Police Review* available on the Force's website (https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/01_about_us/police_review.html). The staff establishment, including both police officers and civilian staff, for all police regions and their respective police districts in 2024, is tabulated as follows:

Police Districts	Establishment (As at 31 December 2024)	
	Police Officers	Civilian Staff
Central District	892	74
Eastern District	798	69
Wan Chai District	773	87
Western District	796	65
Hong Kong Island Region Headquarters	1 182	198
Hong Kong Island Region Total	4 441	493
Kwun Tong District	489	41
Sau Mau Ping District	664	54
Tseung Kwan O District	491	47
Wong Tai Sin District	802	68
Kowloon East Region Headquarters	1 003 [^]	88
Kowloon East Region Total	3 449	298
Kowloon City District	886	81
Mong Kok District	780	82
Sham Shui Po District	964	79
Yau Tsim District	1 109	96
Kowloon West Region Headquarters	1 434	279
Kowloon West Region Total	5 173	617
Border District	1 116	96
Tai Po District	874	62
Tuen Mun District	804	61
Yuen Long District	1 140	78
New Territories North Region Headquarters	1 347	267
New Territories North Region Total	5 281	564
Airport District	608	45
Kwai Tsing District	774	61
Lantau District	379	37
Shatin District	896	72
Tsuen Wan District	646	50
New Territories South Region Headquarters	1 152	90
New Territories South Region Total	4 455	355
Outer Waters District	1 126	48
Port District	674	37
Marine Region	520	68
Marine Region Total	2 320	153
Other Departments Total	7 957	2 170
Grand Total	33 076	4 650

[^] Including 13 leave reserve posts from the former Railway District.

The estimated expenditures of all police regions form part of the total expenditure under the Programme “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- 2) The Force will review the manpower and resources of all police districts from time to time, and adjust the staff establishment and redeploy resources flexibly according to policing needs in view of factors such as crime trends, infrastructural developments, population growth and geographical characteristics.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB192

(Question Serial No. 3846)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding technology crime, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) The number of technology crime cases reported in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25), with a breakdown by type;
- 2) The number of technology crime cases detected in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) and the amounts involved. Please also advise details on the research work on technology crimes conducted by the Law Reform Commission that requires collaboration with the Police Force and the progress made; as well as initiatives taken by the Police Force to better protect the public and to strengthen its efforts in combating technology crime (including legislative enhancements and digital policing initiatives);
- 3) The respective ranks, duties, formations and salaries of the 18 posts subject to the net decrease under Programme (2) in 2025-26, as well as the reasons for such a reduction; and
- 4) Noting that under Matters Requiring Special Attention that the Police Force will enhance its capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation, please advise on the initiatives to be undertaken to achieve these goals despite the net decrease of 18 posts under Programme (2) in 2025-26.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 65)

Reply:

- 1) The number of common technology crime cases reported to the Police Force in each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	Number of Cases				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Technology Crime	12 916	16 159	22 797	34 112	33 903
Online Deception	10 716	13 859	19 599	27 314	27 485
Common Types of Online Scam					
Online Shopping Fraud	6 678	6 120	8 735	8 950	11 559
Online Investment Fraud	544	980	1 884	5 105	3 930
Online Employment Fraud	236	1 063	2 884	3 518	3 853
Phishing Scam (Note)				4 322	2 731
Social Media Deception	1 988	3 638	3 605	3 372	3 039
Email Scam	767	549	391	208	197
Misuse of Computer	111	142	192	3 471	3 055
Account Abuse	79	123	168	3 434	2 989
Hacking Activities	30	18	24	37	61
Distributed Denial-of-service Attacks	2	1	-	-	5
Internet Blackmail	1 144	1 317	1 557	2 428	2 559
Naked Chat	1 009	1 159	1 402	2 117	2 434
Other Internet Blackmail	135	158	155	311	125

Note: Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

2, 4) The amount involved in the common types of technology crime reported to the Force in each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	Amount of losses (\$ million)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Technology Crime	2,964.1	3,023.8	3,215.4	5,496.8	5,129.0
Online Deception	2,945.6	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9	4,924.1
Common Types of Online Scam					
Online Shopping Fraud	122.3	71.5	74.1	190.5	356.3
Online Investment Fraud	266.3	472.0	926.5	3,267.4	2,261.7
Online Employment Fraud	10.5	85.3	459.1	760.2	797.2
Phishing Scam (Note)				102.4	53.5
Social Media Deception	259.1	669.4	779.0	745.4	662.5
Email Scam	2,247.4	1538.8	751.1	163.6	104.1
Misuse of Computer	6.2	34.5	74.5	89.7	121.4
Account Abuse	5.1	34.3	73.8	87.6	91.3
Hacking Activities	1.1	0.2	0.7	2.1	25.5
Distributed Denial-of-service Attacks	-	-	-	-	4.6
Internet Blackmail	9.1	15.0	23.0	48.9	81.6
Naked Chat	8.0	13.9	22.1	44.1	80.2
Other Internet Blackmail	1.1	1.1	0.9	4.8	1.4

Note: Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

The Force does not maintain statistics on cases detected for the respective crimes.

The Force is committed to taking proactive measures to combat technology crime and money laundering activities, primarily through the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB).

Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime are among Commissioner's Operational Priorities in 2025. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Digital Policy Office and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force's digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2024, 7 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On the international cooperation front, officers of the CSTCB attended the first International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Asia and South Pacific Working Group Meeting on Cybercrime for Heads of Units held in the Philippines in September 2024. The Chief Superintendent of CSTCB was elected Vice-Chairperson of the group to lead and work with Singapore and Fiji Police Forces in deepening cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies in the Asian and South Pacific region and to formulate long-term strategies for enhancing joint operational capabilities in combating technology crimes. In October 2024, CSTCB and INTERPOL jointly organised the 14th INTERPOL Cybercrime Directors Workshop. The event provided a platform for law enforcement agencies and corporate entities to exchange ideas and collaborate on tackling cybercrime challenges, including issues related to deepfake technology, AI-related cybercrime, ransomware and malware threats.

In terms of staff training, the CSTCB regularly conducts training programmes to bolster police officers' expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

Targeting and investigating money laundering activities is among the Commissioner's Operational Priorities for 2025. The Force has been strengthening its professional capabilities in financial intelligence analysis and financial investigations, including the founding of the Money Laundering Expert Cadre in October 2022, a volunteer secondary duty cadre currently comprising over 50 officers to assist the frontline in investigating money laundering cases and to testify as expert witnesses in court hearings. In addition, funding was approved in 2021 for the FIIB to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform. This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the FIIB, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Evaluation Sharing Tool for banks to share information on corporate accounts involved in fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rates of identifying and combatting criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In

January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, which automates fund flow analysis to a high degree, enabling investigators to conduct fund flow and network analysis with greater efficiency.

To combat money laundering, the Force continues to strengthen the knowledge and techniques of police officers and industry stakeholders in financial investigations by regularly offering local and international training courses. Additionally, the Force has been refining collaboration mechanisms with local financial institutions, international organisations and law enforcement agencies from the Mainland and overseas to enhance efforts against money laundering. To further promote public-private cooperation in combating money laundering, the Force organised the Financial Institutions Anti-Money Laundering Forum in August 2024. Through panel discussions, the forum facilitated the exploration of collaborative strategies with representatives from various law enforcement agencies, financial regulators and financial institutions.

The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and, where necessary, adjust the staff establishment in response to the latest crime trends.

To combat and prevent deception, the Force will proactively explore all feasible measures, including ways to improve existing legislation and initiatives. The Force will also maintain close collaboration with relevant stakeholders and, where necessary, propose recommendations from a law enforcement perspective. Specifically, the Chief Superintendent of CSTCB, a member of the Cybercrime Sub-committee of the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong, has been proactively proposing recommendations to refine the relevant legislations from a law enforcement perspective.

- 3) In 2025-26, the Force will have a net decrease of 18 non-directorate posts (including an increase of 5 civilian posts and a decrease of 17 disciplined service posts and 6 civilian posts) under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime” through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment, streamlining of work processes and improving work efficiency.

Details on the 17 disciplined service posts and 6 civilian posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2024)
Chief Inspector	-1	PPS 44 - 49	103,205 - 127,620
Senior Inspector/Inspector	-2	PPS 24 - 43	52,015 - 99,500
Station Sergeant	-2	PPS 24 - 33a	52,015 - 76,830
Sergeant	-4	PPS 17 - 28	42,390 - 60,850
Police Constable	-8	PPS 4 - 17	28,940 - 42,390
Total (police officers)	-17		

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2024)
Clerical Assistant	-3	MPS 1 - 10	15,180 - 26,590
Data Processor	-1	MPS 2 - 11	16,135 - 28,225
Workman II	-2	MOD 0 - 8	15,175 - 17,880
Total (civilian staff)	-6		
Total	-23		

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB193

(Question Serial No. 3847)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under Programme (2), the Police Force will maintain a high standard of investigation and provide professional service in all cases of domestic violence and continue to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach with other stakeholders in tackling the problem. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) The number of cases involving domestic violence for each of the past 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25), categorised by police division, case category and victim type (e.g. children); and
- 2) Details on how the Police Force will continue to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach with other stakeholders to tackle the problem of domestic violence when handling such cases, including whether resources will be allocated to professional bodies.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 66)

Reply:

- 1) The Police Force attaches great importance to offences of domestic violence. Police officers will handle and investigate such cases with empathy, professionalism, fairness and impartiality.

Domestic violence refers to any cases involving assault or a breach of the peace that occurs between persons having marital or intimate partner relationships. These relationships include married, separated or divorced couples, cohabitants or former cohabitants, and lovers or former lovers.

Domestic Conflict Reports can be classified as “Domestic Violence (Crime)” (including more serious criminal cases such as murder, wounding, rape, indecent assault, criminal intimidation, etc.); “Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)” (including common assault and a breach of the peace); and “Domestic Incidents” (including cases not involving a breach of the peace or crime elements such as disputes and nuisance).

The numbers of Domestic Conflict Reports received by the Force in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Domestic Violence (Crime)	1 139	1 196	1 128	1 235	1 163
Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)	466	470	437	470	413
Domestic Incidents	7 500	7 646	7 450	7 650	7 313
Total number of Domestic Conflict Reports	9 105	9 312	9 015	9 355	8 889

The numbers of cases involving Domestic Violence (Crime) categorised by gender of the victims in the past 5 years are set out below:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Male	258	278	287	315	303
Female	881	918	841	920	860

The Force does not maintain statistics on victim type.

The numbers of cases involving Domestic Violence (Crime) and Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous) categorised by police district in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Domestic Violence (Crime)																					Total	
	Hong Kong Island Region				Kowloon East Region				Kowloon West Region				New Territories North Region				New Territories South Region				Marine Region		
	Eastern District	Wan Chai District	Central District	Western District	Wong Tai Sin District	Kwun Tong District	Tseung Kwan O District	Sau Mau Ping District	Mong Kok District	Sham Shui Po District	Yau Tsim District	Kowloon City District	Tai Po District	Tuen Mun District	Yuen Long District	Border District	Tsuen Wan District	Kwai Tsing District	Shatin District	Lantau District	Airport District		
2020	56	42	17	37	72	38	28	59	57	99	76	66	79	66	94	14	40	82	80	31	0	6	1 139
2021	39	37	24	38	52	53	48	77	67	88	73	68	69	71	132	10	46	91	87	23	1	2	1 196
2022	45	19	18	27	56	39	46	74	51	98	68	64	101	65	131	22	40	79	63	19	0	3	1 128
2023	50	25	16	33	73	37	30	55	71	121	85	73	99	84	132	21	36	69	87	31	3	4	1 235
2024	38	18	25	34	51	37	46	62	70	85	61	61	96	98	123	12	38	89	83	30	1	5	1 163

Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)																							
Year	Hong Kong Island Region				Kowloon East Region				Kowloon West Region				New Territories North Region				New Territories South Region				Marine Region	Total	
	Eastern District	Wan Chai District	Central District	Western District	Wong Tai Sin District	Kwun Tong District	Tseung Kwan O District	Sau Mau Ping District	Mong Kok District	Sham Shui Po District	Yau Tsim District	Kowloon City District	Tai Po District	Tuen Mun District	Yuen Long District	Border District	Tsuen Wan District	Kwai Tsing District	Shatin District	Lantau District	Airport District		
2020	25	6	3	6	22	13	7	22	29	45	33	41	59	23	36	3	28	23	33	6	0	3	466
2021	6	11	11	14	18	9	9	31	23	39	38	36	40	23	49	12	36	27	28	9	0	1	470
2022	7	5	0	8	20	17	7	25	27	52	35	40	39	26	47	3	24	16	26	11	1	1	437
2023	12	4	5	12	24	9	11	22	25	59	30	35	65	29	57	4	23	19	13	10	2	0	470
2024	16	5	5	12	18	6	9	20	23	49	21	19	56	29	59	3	15	22	9	12	4	1	413

2) Domestic violence is not only a crime but also a social issue. Therefore, a collective effort is needed to handle domestic violence cases. The Force has been handling such cases through an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary approach, with a view to achieving the dual objectives of protecting the personal safety of the victims and their families as well as bringing the offenders to justice.

A regular referral mechanism has been established between the Force and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) since 2003 through which the Force, in general, having obtained the consent from victims of domestic violence cases, refers cases to the SWD for follow-up service. Non-consensual referrals are also made if an individual case is assessed as high-risk and a Superintendent of Police, after personally reviewing the case, decides that a referral is necessary to mitigate the risk of further deterioration. To strengthen communication between frontline police officers and social workers during the case referral process, the SWD will acknowledge receipt on receiving a police referral and inform the Force of the contact details of the responsible social worker. They will also inform whether the victims have accepted, among others, the follow-up service.

Moreover, to facilitate the Force's work in seeking urgent professional advice and social work support for handling urgent and high-risk cases, a 24-hour Direct Referral Line has been set up for police officers by the SWD since October 2006.

The Force has implemented the "Let's T.A.L.K. Child Protection Campaign" since 2021. To further enhance public awareness and prevent domestic violence cases, the Force also staged a large-scale carnival, "Let's T.A.L.K. LOL Party 2024", at the West Kowloon Cultural District from 16 to 17 November 2024, attracting around 17 000 participants. The event has fostered child protection and anti-drug awareness, encouraging the public to build harmonious families together and create a caring environment of mutual trust.

To raise public awareness and prevent domestic violence cases, the Force will continue to work closely with relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations and stakeholders from various professional sectors.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB194

(Question Serial No. 3464)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

According to information released by the Police, a total of 94 747 crimes were reported last year, representing a year-on-year increase of 5%. Among these, the number of deception cases rose by 11.7% to 44 480, accounting for 46.9% of the overall number of crimes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

- 1) Whether the Police can provide a detailed breakdown of the specific allocation of funds for each programme (Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community, Prevention and Detection of Crime, Road Safety, and Operations) in the 2025-26 Estimates, as well as the percentage increase or decrease compared to the previous year. Please also explain the rationale behind these allocation decisions;
- 2) The specific measures the Police have taken to enhance operational efficiency, such as innovative solutions involving technology applications or inter-departmental collaboration, the effectiveness of these measures, and whether there are plans to expand their scope of application or introduce new measures to further enhance efficiency;
- 3) The key initiatives the Police plan to implement in 2025-26 to combat deception cases, including the targets, the estimated resources to be allocated, the current progress, and whether key performance indicators have been established to measure the effectiveness;
- 4) Whether the Police intend to strengthen communication channels with the public to raise awareness of deception and improve self-protection capabilities, in view of the increasingly serious issue of deception. Please provide detailed information on the future plans in this area, along with the specific resource allocation in the budget.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 52)

Reply:

- 1) The allocation of provision by programme in the estimates for 2025-26, along with the increment compared to the revised estimates for 2024-25, are as follows:

Programme	2024-25 (Revised) (\$ million)	2025-26 (Estimate) (\$ million)	Increment
(1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community	12,458.4	12,568.9	+0.9%
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime	5,854.8	5,965.2	+1.9%
(3) Road Safety	2,486.3	2,512.4	+1.0%
(4) Operations	5,935.0	7,010.0	+18.1%

The allocation of provision to programmes was determined based on the respective staff establishment and the changes in cash flow requirements for operating and capital accounts.

- 2-4) The Police Force has been proactively exploring the use of technology to prevent and combat various types of crimes, including deceptions and technology crimes.

In September 2022, the Force established the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub (e-Hub), a one-stop platform for handling electronic reports on technology crimes and deceptions. The e-Hub conducts correlation analysis on cases through an enhanced computer system to identify relevant clusters of cases for consolidated investigation, with a view to focusing resources on following up the cases in a more efficient and effective manner, thereby enhancing the Force’s effectiveness in handling technology crimes and deceptions. Since July 2024, through case analysis, the e-Hub has been coordinating frontline operations and consolidating information on stooge accounts. Cases involving the same stooge account holders are assigned to a single investigation team for follow-up, further improving investigation efficiency.

To enhance the capabilities of frontline investigation formations in handling deceptions and technology crimes, the Force has introduced a series of internal electronic systems in recent years. These include the “e-154 App”, “Bank Document Digitalization System”, “Bank Statement Conversion and Analysis System”, “Electronic Stop-Payment System”, “CryptoTrace” and “Digital Forensics Laboratory System”.

In 2021, funding was approved for the Force to develop the Financial Data Analytic Platform. This platform leverages advanced technologies and big data analysis tools to enhance the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the banking sector, launched the Financial Intelligence Evaluation Sharing Tool for banks to share information on corporate accounts involved in fraud-related money laundering activities, improving the success rates of identifying and combating criminal activities, strengthening due diligence measures and fostering industry-wide cooperation. In January 2025, the Force further introduced the Transaction Analytics System, which automates fund flow analysis to a high degree, enabling investigators to conduct fund flow and network analysis with greater efficiency.

Meanwhile, to better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, the Force launched the self-developed “Scameter” in September 2022 and its mobile application “Scameter+” in February 2023. In February 2024, the Force upgraded “Scameter+” by introducing a public reporting platform to enrich its database and enabling it to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, “Scameter” had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. Another critical feature of “Scameter” is the Suspicious Account Alert. In August 2024, the Force, together with the HKMA, announced that the scope of the alert mechanism had been extended from the Faster Payment System to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions, and it was further expanded in December last year to include transactions at Automated Teller Machines. The mechanism has covered the majority of the public’s day-to-day transfers. If the recipient’s account number is labelled as suspicious in the “Scameter” database, the system will send a high risk alert to the user before confirming the transaction.

The Force continues to request telecommunications service providers to block and intercept phone numbers and websites suspected to be involved in deception cases. By the end of last year, nearly 30 000 suspicious website links and over 8 300 suspicious phone numbers had been intercepted.

In 2024, 44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing an increase of 11.7% compared with 2023. The increase in deception cases in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023, while the amount involved dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that the Force’s efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past 3 years are beginning to yield results.

The Force will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, and social media like the Force’s official accounts on Facebook and Xiaohongshu, the websites of the “CyberDefender” and the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre, as well as the mobile application “Scameter+” to disseminate anti-deception message in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. The Force has also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds. The Force will continue to explore technological solutions to combat deception while actively promoting the use of “Scameter+”.

To further enhance public safety and combat crime comprehensively, the Force has been installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at various locations across the territory since April 2024. By the end of last year, a total of 615 sets of CCTV cameras had been installed, and the first phase of installation comprising 2 000 sets of CCTV cameras in total will be completed within this year. As at the end of December 2024, the CCTV system had assisted the Force in detecting 122 cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, resulting in 202 arrests. Among the 28 cases of murder, robbery and burglary detected with the assistance of CCTV system, 90% were detected within an average of 2 days. This demonstrates that the CCTV system not

only makes investigations more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from assisting in detecting crime, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. To understand the relevant figures, the Force conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes (down by 3.2% to 27.4%) after the installation of CCTVs, demonstrating the scheme's significant positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

Expenditures on combating deceptions and technology crimes through technological solutions form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

The Force has no plans to formulate key performance indicators for combating specific types of crimes.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB195

(Question Serial No. 3496)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the "Animal Watchers Programme", will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The staff establishment and expenditure involved;
2. The number of activities organised over the past 3 years to raise public awareness about assisting in combating animal cruelty, the number of engagements and details of the effectiveness of these efforts;
3. The number of reports received, investigations conducted, and prosecutions initiated in relation to animal cruelty over the past 3 years; and
4. In light of recent dog poisoning cases, whether proactive investigations have been conducted and whether the installation of closed-circuit televisions at specific black spots, particularly in pet gardens managed by the Government, has been considered to deter such acts. If so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 137)

Reply:

1. To enlist public support and assistance in combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Police Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animal lovers at the community level and on social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations.

The Force has dedicated officers to implement the AWP at the policy-making level as well as in frontline police districts. The expenditures involved form part of the total expenditure under Programme (1) “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community” and Programme (4) “Operations” respectively. No specific breakdown is available.

2. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In 2022, the Force launched a series of educational and promotional activities under the banner of “AWP x 25A”. These activities included the “AWP Colours in 25A” colouring and drawing contest, school promotions titled “Animal Care Corner”, and the “BYOP (Bring Your Own Pet) Treasure Hunt”. In 2023, AWP initiated the “Synergy for Great” initiative, collaborating with various organisations to introduce the “Life-wide Animal Care College” educational programmes. This initiative featured the “Adventure King Summer Camp”, educational seminars, visits to the veterinary medical centre, and the “Hang-in-there Charity Challenge” in observance of World Animal Day. In 2024, AWP organised a variety of activities, including the “Education Programme of Ocean Park Academy Hong Kong”, “Community Mobile Classroom 2.0”, “Animal Care Summer Camp” and the “Bring Your Own Pets x Sunny & Zander Charity Run.” Furthermore, AWP has partnered with the Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong to launch the “AWP Student Mentorship Programme”, aimed at providing professional animal care guidance to students in schools with an “Animal Care Corner”.

The events organised from 2022 to 2024 saw the physical participation of over 164 000 people, with more than 19 million online engagements (e.g. social media posts) recorded. The Force will continue its efforts to raise public awareness about preventing cruelty to animals through the AWP initiative. A multifaceted approach will be used to evaluate its effectiveness, using a variety of indicators such as the number of cases reported, the number of persons arrested and the level of public engagement. Currently, most animal cruelty cases are reported to the Force by members of the public who voluntarily provide information for investigations. This demonstrates that the AWP initiative has a significant impact on enhancing police-community co-operation and raising public awareness in the fight against animal cruelty.

3. The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Force and prosecutions instituted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024
Number of cases reported	54	74	71
Number of persons arrested	32	60	59
Number of prosecutions instituted	20	22	17 (as at third quarter)

4. The Force has all along attached importance to suspected cases of animal cruelty. To combat such offences, the Force has established Animal Crime Police Teams in 22 police districts. These teams are staffed by officers with experience in investigating and handling serious crimes. In addition, the Force, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) have established a collaborative mechanism to proactively prevent and investigate related crimes through multi-agency collaboration. Where necessary, AFCD and SPCA officers will attend the scene of an animal cruelty case to provide professional advice and assist in the investigation.

To further enhance law and order and combat crime in a holistic manner, the Force has been installing closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) across Hong Kong since April 2024. At present, CCTVs have been installed at 615 locations with high crime rates and heavy pedestrian traffic across all 18 districts in the territory. The initial stage of the Territory-wide CCTV Installation Scheme aims to complete the installation of 2 000 CCTV units by the end of 2025.

The Force will continue to assess locations with high crime rates and pedestrian flow across the 18 districts. CCTVs will be strategically installed in these areas to enhance the Force's capability in preventing and detecting crimes. Through this initiative, the Force seeks to improve overall law and order across the territory.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB196

(Question Serial No. 3818)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In addressing technology-related deception, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of reported cases, the amount of financial losses and the number of arrests and prosecutions related to the use of AI technologies, such as face swapping or voice manipulation, over the past 3 years and up to the present;
2. The expenditure and manpower allocated this financial year for combatting such crimes, along with the objectives and planned initiatives; and
3. Given the rise in such crimes, which are increasingly difficult to prevent, whether reference has been made to overseas practices to strengthen enforcement, and whether consideration has been given in collaboration with relevant departments on legislating to protect the personality rights of public figures. If so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 160)

Reply:

1. In view of the emergence of new modus operandi involving deepfake technology in recent years, the Police Force has been maintaining separate statistics on this type of fraud since 2023. The first case was detected through the Force's proactive intelligence-led investigation. During an operation code-named Smashscam in August 2023, the Force smashed a local fraud syndicate suspected of using an artificial intelligence (AI) face-swapping programme to steal others' identities and apply for loans online from finance companies. The case involved \$200,000 and 9 persons were arrested for the suspected offence of "conspiracy to defraud".

In 2024, a total of 3 fraud cases involving deepfake technology were reported to the Force. The first two cases, which remain under investigation, are believed to involve the use of pre-recorded video conferences, resulting in financial losses of \$240 million and \$4 million respectively. The third case was detected through the Force's proactive intelligence-led investigation, leading to the neutralisation of a triad-controlled criminal

syndicate. The syndicate used deepfake technology to engage in online dating to lure victims in Hong Kong, the Mainland and other parts of Asia to invest in cryptocurrencies. The case involved more than \$360 million, with 27 persons arrested, including the masterminds and key members of the syndicate.

In January 2025, the Force launched another intelligence-led operation, dismantling a criminal syndicate that used deepfake technology to perpetrate scams. A total of 31 persons, including the masterminds and core members, were arrested, with a total of \$34 million involved. The criminal syndicate used deepfake technology to engage in online dating to lure victims in various parts of Asia to invest in fraudulent cryptocurrency platforms.

The Force does not maintain figures on the number of related prosecutions.

2. In response to various challenges posed to cyber policing by AI such as deepfake technology, the Force has been exchanging intelligence with International Criminal Police Organization, law enforcement agencies of different jurisdictions and the AI industry. The Force has also been keeping track of the latest modus operandi and criminal trends worldwide, which include the application of deepfake technology.

To combat different technology crimes, the Force set up the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) in December 2022. Led by the Director of Crime and Security and comprising 12 experts and leaders from the technology sector, the CPAP seeks to look into risks of crime and fraud involving AI (including deepfake technology) and to enhance public awareness on the potential risks of AI. The Force will continue to step up co-operation with stakeholders of relevant sectors, and will jointly explore and formulate effective measures to combat relevant crimes.

On enhancing professional competence, the Force has been organising internal training from time to time to enrich officers' knowledge of deepfake technology and the related cybercrimes. Relevant equipment will also be timely upgraded to strengthen the Force's capability in combating different types of cybercrimes.

In terms of publicity and education, the Force has been working on various fronts, including holding press conferences from time to time to educate the public about common tactics used by fraudsters and demonstrate how deepfake technology can be used to conduct video conferences. Through its Facebook page and the CyberDefender website, the Force has been disseminating information about the latest crime situation and anti-deception advice related to deepfake technology.

The expenditure on combating technology-related fraud forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

3. To combat and prevent deception, the Force proactively explores all feasible measures, including ways to improve existing legislation and initiatives. The Force will also maintain close collaboration with relevant stakeholders and, where necessary, propose recommendations from a law enforcement perspective.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB197

(Question Serial No. 3660)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the number of reported missing persons with dementia (2018-2024), the number of those found, as well as the average time taken to locate them over the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 188)

Reply:

The number of missing person reports received by the Police Force and the number of cases in which the missing persons were located from 2018 to 2024 are set out below:

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of reports	3 046	2 643	1 934	2 154	2 110	2 705	2 494
Number of cases in which the missing persons were located*	2 723	2 530	1 806	1 655	2 050	2 629	2 419

* The year in which a missing person was located may not correspond to the year the person was reported missing.

The Force does not maintain records on whether the missing persons had illnesses or other related details.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB198

(Question Serial No. 3748)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (CHOW Yat-ming, Joe)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Given the severe psychological trauma caused by sexual offences, it is essential for the Government to adopt proactive measures to combat such crimes and provide appropriate support to victims. In this connection, the Committee request the Government to provide the following information:

1. Over the past few years, sexual offences in Hong Kong have remained a significant concern. To better understand the trends and assess the effectiveness of law enforcement actions, please provide statistics on the following:

. Statistics on general sexual violence offences

	2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted
Rape (Section 118 of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Procuring other persons by threats to do an unlawful sexual act (Section 119 of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Procuring other persons by false pretences to do an unlawful sexual act (Section 120 of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Administering drugs to obtain or facilitate an unlawful sexual act (Section 121 of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Indecent assault (Section 122 of the Crimes Ordinance)															

2. With the advancement of technology, image-based sexual violence offences have become an increasing concern in the community. Please provide law enforcement statistics on the following:

. Statistics on image-based sexual violence offences

	2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		No. of persons convicted
	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of cases reported	No. of persons prosecuted	
Voyeurism (Section 159AAB of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Unlawful recording or observation of intimate parts (Section 159AAC of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Publication of images originating from commission of offence under section 159AAB(1) or 159AAC(1) (Section 159AAD of the Crimes Ordinance)															
Publication or threatened publication of intimate images without consent (Section 159AAE of the Crimes Ordinance)															

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 40)

Reply:

1. The numbers of cases of sexual offences mentioned in the question for the past 5 years are as follows:

	2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted (as at third quarter)*	No. of persons convicted (as at third quarter)*
Rape (Section 118 of the Crimes Ordinance)	64	24	9	79	32	14	53	34	11	67	31	14	77	30	11
Procuring other persons by threats to do an unlawful sexual act (Section 119 of the Crime Ordinance)	8	7	6	15	7	3	11	3	-	6	4	2	10	4	2
Procuring other persons by false pretences to do an unlawful sexual act (Section 120 of the Crimes Ordinance)	2	2	1	4	4	3	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	1
Administering drugs to obtain or facilitate an unlawful sexual act (Section 121 of the Crimes Ordinance)	1	-	-	7	1	1	1	-	-	3	2	1	1	1	-
Indecent assault (Section 122 of the Crimes Ordinance)	682	233	159	1 018	304	202	953	299	197	1 162	355	243	1 185	288	184

* The numbers are based on the year of case conclusion. As some cases require time for investigation or await advice from the Department of Justice, the persons convicted may not necessarily correspond to those prosecuted in the same period. Similarly, the persons prosecuted may not necessarily correspond to those arrested in the same period.

2. Since the gazettal and commencement of voyeurism and related crimes on 8 October 2021, the numbers of cases for such crimes are as follows:

	2021 (from 8 October)			2022			2023			2024		
	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted*	No. of persons convicted*	No. of cases reported to the Police Force	No. of persons prosecuted (as at third quarter)*	No. of persons convicted (as at third quarter)*
Voyeurism (Section 159AAB of the Crimes Ordinance)	31	-	-	99	30	29	139	58	53	172	43	37
Unlawful recording or observation of intimate parts (Section 159AAC of the Crimes Ordinance)	86	-	-	435	178	171	358	207	195	350	135	121
Publication of image originating from commission of offence under section 159AAB(1) or 159AAC (Section 159AAD of the Crimes Ordinance)	2	-	-	7	-	-	7	4	4	5	1	1
Publication or threatened publication of intimate images without consent (Section 159AAE of the Crimes Ordinance)	15	-	-	94	2	2	134	8	7	146	10	7

* The numbers are based on the year of case conclusion. As some cases require time for investigation or await advice from the Department of Justice, the persons convicted may not necessarily correspond to those prosecuted in the same period. Similarly, the persons prosecuted may not necessarily correspond to those arrested in the same period.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB199

(Question Serial No. 3382)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the number of cross-boundary passengers at various control points during public holidays, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What were the average daily numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points during public holidays in the past year?
2. In connection with the above question, what are the ratios of the numbers to the designed handling capacities of the control points? Are there any control points that operate exceeding their designed handling capacities? If yes, what are the details?
3. What is the current number of residents who have registered for using the e-Channel QR code? What is the improvement in clearance efficiency at various control points as compared to the past?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 46)

Reply:

1 and 2. The designed/estimated daily handling capacities of passenger clearance of control points are subject to factors such as actual traffic conditions, travel patterns of passengers, and the development plans and policy measures within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Immigration Department (ImmD) has been taking various measures, in the light of the actual situation and operational needs, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control points in coping with the cross-boundary passenger traffic. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the operation of the control points.

The average daily numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at major control points during public holidays in 2024, and the designed/estimated daily handling capacities of the control points according to the review conducted and information provided by the relevant departments and organisations for reference are tabulated as follows:

Control Point ^{Note 1}	Average daily number of inbound and outbound passenger trips during public holidays in 2024 ^{Note 2}	Designed/estimated daily handling capacity (Number of passenger trips) ^{Note 3}
(i) Airport	126 498	297 600 ^{Note 4}
(ii) Lo Wu	212 529	522 000
(iii) Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	184 325	204 000
(iv) West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	88 859	95 000
(v) Lok Ma Chau	45 481	172 000
(vi) Man Kam To	3 686	38 000
(vii) Shenzhen Bay	122 617	137 000
(viii) Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	105 984	126 000
(ix) Heung Yuen Wai	83 448	30 000
(x) Harbour Control	92	Not applicable ^{Note 5}
(xi) Macau Ferry Terminal	23 063	150 000
(xii) China Ferry Terminal	4 502	58 000
(xiii) Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	2 281 ^{Note 6}	Not applicable ^{Note 7}

Note 1: The River Trade Terminal Control Point mainly provides immigration clearance on Mainland river and coastal trade vessels at the Tuen Mun Immigration Anchorage. The ImmD does not maintain the statistics on the daily number of inbound and outbound passenger trips at the River Trade Terminal. The Hung Hom Control Point has suspended its services upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services since 30 January 2020, and has ceased to operate since 31 July 2024. Passenger and cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 and March 2022 respectively to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 2: General holidays for 2024 gazetted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Note 3: Source: (i) – The Airport Authority; (ii) to (iii), (v) to (vii) and (xi) to (xii) – The review on the daily handling capacity conducted by the Planning Department in 2013, which estimated the highest handling capacity of each control point, taking into account the situation of inbound and outbound travels, on the assumption that all immigration counters and self-service clearance channels would be put into operation; (iv) – Legislative Council Paper No. CB(4)1500/17-18(01) of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the Operating Arrangements for the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link; (viii) – Projection on the daily passenger flow in 2030 as estimated by the consultant engaged by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao; and (ix) – Information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017.

Note 4: The figure was provided by the Airport Authority based on the highest hourly handling capacity of arriving and departing passengers at the Hong Kong International Airport Concourse as released by the Civil Aviation Department.

Note 5: Harbour Control, a shipping control point, conducts immigration clearance on incoming and outgoing vessels at the Eastern and the Western Immigration Anchorages, and has no such hardware facilities as immigration counters and self-service clearance channels, etc. Hence, it is not suitable to make an analysis on the designed daily handling capacity of passenger clearance.

Note 6: The number of inbound and outbound passenger trips included trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, the Ocean Terminal and other anchorages.

Note 7: Owing to the seasonal nature of cruise operations, the utilisation of the cruise terminal during certain periods (such as typhoon seasons) is lower. Hence, it is not suitable to make an analysis on the designed daily handling capacity of passenger clearance.

3. The ImmD launched the Contactless e-Channel service in 2021 to allow registered Hong Kong residents to perform self-service immigration clearance using an encrypted QR code generated by the “Contactless e-Channel” mobile application or their smart identity cards and facial recognition technology. The entire process only takes about 7 seconds, which is 13% faster than the 8 seconds required by traditional e-Channels. As at the end of February 2025, over 5.4 million Hong Kong residents had registered for the service and the number of passengers who used the service exceeded 160 million, accounting for about 75% of the daily number of Hong Kong residents using the e-Channels. The service has further enhanced the capacity of port clearance, providing passengers with more convenient immigration service.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB200

(Question Serial No. 3400)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (STV Scheme) (Page 586) has been implemented with effect from 1 June 2024. Please provide, by 12 designated sectors, the average number of days between the receipt of an application and the grant of an approval for “eligible visitors” by the Immigration Department, the number of “eligible visitors”, and the average number of days for which the “eligible visitors” participated in activities in Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 67)

Reply:

The Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) on 1 June 2022, and regularised the Pilot Scheme with effect from 1 June 2024. Upon regularisation, the scheme has been named the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (STV Scheme).

As of December 2024, the Pilot Scheme/STV Scheme benefited a total of 30 158 non-local talent, facilitating their entry into Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities. Organisations authorised by the relevant government bureaux or departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talent in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors without the need to apply for employment visas or entry permits from the Immigration Department (ImmD). At present, the STV Scheme covers 12 sectors, viz., Medical and Healthcare, Higher Education, Arts and Culture, Sports, Heritage, Creative Industries, Innovation and Technology, the Hong Kong Laureate Forum, Aviation, International/Mega Events, Finance, and Development and Construction, with a total of some 400 authorised organisations. The statistics of the beneficiaries by sector are tabulated below:

Sector	Number of non-local talent who came to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities (From 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024) (Note 1)
Medical and Healthcare	1 170
Higher Education	6 305
Arts and Culture	2 265
Sports	18 813
Heritage	188
Creative Industries	8
Innovation and Technology	255
Hong Kong Laureate Forum	122
Aviation	0
International/Mega Events	999
Finance (Note 2)	10
Development and Construction (Note 2)	23
Total	30 158

Note 1: The statistics are compiled on a quarterly basis, thus the statistics for the first quarter of 2025 are not yet available.

Note 2: New sectors after the expansion of the scheme on 1 February 2023.

The non-local talent enjoying the Pilot Scheme/STV Scheme participated in the relevant short-term activities in Hong Kong for about 5 days on average. The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of statistics by sector.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB201

(Question Serial No. 3404)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the applications for change of status and the applications processed in the financial years of 2023 and 2024 (page 588), please break down the number of applications for change of status by category of specific reasons, and provide relevant information on the average number of days taken for processing each category of these applications.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 68)

Reply:

If a person who has been permitted to stay in Hong Kong under an admission scheme/immigration arrangement subsequently applies to remain in Hong Kong under another scheme/arrangement, their status may be subject to change upon approval of the application. For example, a non-local student may apply to remain in Hong Kong under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates; or a person working in Hong Kong under an admission scheme, such as the General Employment Policy, may apply to remain in Hong Kong for study as a non-local student, etc.

Applications relating to change of status will normally be completed within 6 weeks upon the applicants' submission of all required information and supporting documents. The numbers of the relevant applications received and approved in the past 2 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2023-24	2024-25 (As at February 2025)
No. of applications received	12 455	17 204
No. of applications approved	11 666	15 598

The Immigration Department does not maintain breakdown statistics on the reasons for change of status.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB202

(Question Serial No. 3405)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Immigration Department plans to introduce the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons (the Scheme) by mid-2025 (page 588). Please provide the following information:

1. Is the Scheme applicable only to the visa and entry arrangements for visitors from countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)? If yes, how is the Scheme different from other existing immigration facilitation schemes that also apply to visitors from ASEAN countries in terms of coverage, specific content of the immigration facilitation measures and the application process, etc.?
2. Given that a number of immigration facilitation schemes applicable to visitors from ASEAN countries are already in place in Hong Kong, what promotional and publicity strategies will the Government adopt in introducing the Scheme, so as to ensure that the target group is selectively reached for precise promotion? How does the Government plan to inform the target group of the benefits and applicability of different immigration facilitation schemes, so that they can make choices that suit them best?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 69)

Reply:

1. At present, among the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), visitors from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam are required to apply for visas to visit Hong Kong. In addition, frequent visitors to Hong Kong may apply for self-service immigration clearance at the control points of Hong Kong. Generally speaking, visitors who hold the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Business Travel Cards and visit visas for multiple visits to Hong Kong (if applicable), or holders of passports from visa-free countries who have visited Hong Kong 3 times or more in the past 12 months etc., can apply to the Immigration Department (ImmD) for self-service immigration clearance.

As announced in the 2024 Policy Address, the Government will proactively provide more convenient immigration arrangements for invited persons from ASEAN countries.

In this connection, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government officially launched the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons (the Scheme) on 18 March this year. Unlike the previous practice for visitors to make their own applications, relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) of the HKSAR Government would actively invite ASEAN nationals who can make considerable contributions to Hong Kong's economic development, or who have been invited to attend important events in Hong Kong, to enjoy the immigration facilitation under the Scheme. At present, 5 B/Ds, including the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Department of Justice, are responsible for recommending and inviting ASEAN nationals relevant to their respective policy areas to join the Scheme.

The ImmD will process the applications from invited persons through a one-stop electronic platform, and relax the application criteria for self-service immigration clearance by no longer considering the number of their previous visits to Hong Kong. As regards nationals of the 4 ASEAN countries who require a visa to visit Hong Kong, the ImmD will relax the conditions for applying for "multiple-entry" visit visas and significantly simplify the required documents for visa applications. Specifically, they basically only need to submit a copy of their travel document and the completed electronic application form. Their past travel records will no longer be considered. Invited persons can enjoy self-service immigration clearance service at the control points of Hong Kong, which will greatly enhance clearance efficiency and experience. They can also opt to use the courtesy channel if needed.

Moreover, in recent years, the HKSAR Government has relaxed the criteria for nationals of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar to apply for "multiple-entry" visit visas to Hong Kong for travel and business, from mainly considering their past frequency of visiting Hong Kong to considering their travel records to different countries/regions (i.e. no longer limited to Hong Kong). Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government has introduced a fast-track arrangement for group visitors from these 4 countries. The processing of their visa applications submitted via Hong Kong travel agents would be expedited, with the processing time significantly shortened from 4 weeks as in the past to 2 weeks upon receipt of all documents.

2. The HKSAR Government has been conducting targeted promotion for targeted groups of various immigration facilitation schemes and measures. For instance, the ImmD has organised online briefings to explain the fast-track arrangement for group visitors from the relevant ASEAN countries to local licensed travel agents. Following the official implementation of the Scheme, relevant B/Ds have been inviting ASEAN nationals relevant to their respective policy areas to join the Scheme. The first batch of invited persons covers individuals from the business and legal sectors of different ASEAN countries. The HKSAR Government has also launched extensive promotion through the relevant B/Ds, overseas offices, etc., while maintaining close communication with the relevant consulates in Hong Kong, with a view to further enhancing Hong Kong's image and status in ASEAN through the Scheme.

Looking ahead, the HKSAR Government will continue to promote ASEAN-specific visa and immigration facilitation measures on multiple fronts, such as stepping up

publicity during government officials' visits to ASEAN countries, so as to foster commercial exchanges and people flow between Hong Kong and various ASEAN countries.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB203

(Question Serial No. 3406)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In view of the increasing number of Hong Kong residents travelling to the Mainland for spending, and with regard to the preparation for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours (page 589), please provide the following information:

1. Following the conduct of simulations using technologies such as artificial intelligence or big data, what are the Government's assessment and analysis of the impact of implementing round-the-clock clearance on easing cross-boundary passenger traffic at other boundary control points? Furthermore, based on the results, what will be the specific changes in the distribution of passenger traffic at different boundary control points after the implementation of round-the-clock clearance?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 70)

Reply:

1. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of respective BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

Meanwhile, the Immigration Department will continue to make reference to past passenger traffic data and take various measures, in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control points, thereby meeting the development needs of land BCPs, as well as changes in passenger traffic and service demands. Additional resources will also be sought through established mechanisms when necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB204****(Question Serial No. 3407)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Control after EntryControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Regarding the number of non-refoulement claim cases made in the past 3 years (page 591), please provide the following information:

1. the respective numbers of persons who landed lawfully and unlawfully by sea, land and air;
2. among those who landed lawfully, the respective numbers of persons who were visa-free and with different types of visas (including visit visas, employment visas, visas for foreign domestic helpers and other visas);
3. whether systematic analysis will be conducted on all of the above data using technology to infer the modes of entry of those likely to lodge claims, in order to make adjustments to the relevant policies and enforcement actions.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 71)Reply:

(1)-(2) In the past 3 years, the number of non-refoulement claims received by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Number of claims received
2022	1 257
2023	2 135
2024	2 814
2025 (January to February)	400
Total	6 606

The status in Hong Kong of the aforesaid non-refoulement claimants is tabulated as follows:

Status in Hong Kong	Number of claims
Illegal immigrants (IIs)	2 003
Overstayers	4 132
Others	471
Total	6 606

One of the major sources of persons making non-refoulement claims is IIs. Among the non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) IIs intercepted in 2024, the majority (nearly 90%) entered Hong Kong by sea, while the remaining entered Hong Kong illegally by land.

Among the 4 132 non-refoulement claims lodged by overstayers, 2 190 were from former foreign domestic helpers, while the rest were lodged by visitors or persons who entered Hong Kong with other types of visas. The ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

(3) The Government has continued to implement measures to strengthen interception at source, reduce the economic incentives for potential non-refoulement claimants/NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong, improve the handling of non-refoulement claims and expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. To combat illegal immigration more precisely, the ImmD will continue to conduct in-depth analysis of intelligence, including the places of origin and routing of the NEC IIs. It will also strengthen intelligence exchange with relevant Mainland and Macao law enforcement authorities, and maintain close contact and undertake joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force. Furthermore, the Government has rolled out the Advance Passenger Information (API) system in phases starting from 3 September 2024. As at end-February 2025, 86 airline operators have been connected to the system, which accounted for 60% of the overall airline operators, including Hong Kong-based airline operators such as the Cathay Pacific Airways, the Hong Kong Airlines, the Greater Bay Airlines and the Hong Kong Express Airways. As for the around 60 remaining airline operators, the ImmD will continue to maintain close communication with them with a view to ensuring that the relevant system connection works will be completed in an orderly manner before 1 September 2025. In just a few months of operation, the API system has been effective in successfully identifying and denying boarding of flights by ineligible persons, including persons who had lodged non-refoulement claims in Hong Kong but were eventually rejected and repatriated to their places of origin.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB205

(Question Serial No. 3408)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work in relation to Hong Kong residents' awareness of outbound travel safety and understanding of consular protection (page 594), please provide the following information:

1. How is the content of various publicity and education ensured to fit with Hong Kong people's travel habits, such as targeting different travel patterns (individual visits, tour groups, business visits, etc.), countries or regions frequently visited, or activities in which Hong Kong people are mainly engaged when travelling abroad, so that knowledge of safety and consular protection measures under any specific circumstances can be covered?
2. Is there any evaluation of the effectiveness of existing publicity channels and education activities, and how is it carried out? For instance, will there be the establishment of a feedback mechanism to collect public opinions and suggestions about these activities in order to make adjustments to the relevant publicity and education work?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 72)

Reply:

(1) The Immigration Department (ImmD) has been joining hands with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in organising various activities and taking forward publicity work, with a view to increasing the awareness of outbound travel safety of Hong Kong residents as well as their understanding of national consular protection and the work of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU).

To enhance the public's understanding of consular protection provided by our country, the ImmD has organised a series of publicity activities in June and since December 2024 respectively, including exhibitions staged in shopping centres across the territory in which 1868 Ambassador "Ah Bong", the AHU's mascot, was presented to promote among the public the consular protection work of our country and outbound travel safety prior to long holidays. The ImmD will also adjust the publicity information based on the latest requests for assistance, such as including additional information on points to note for self-drive tours

outside Hong Kong and anti-scam awareness, etc. In addition, in order to widely spread the word about national consular protection, the AHU has stepped up advertising and publicity efforts in popular gathering places and on public transport, and launched various promotional items to make the information on national consular protection and its importance more widely known to the public. At the same time, the AHU will continue to pay visits to schools (extended to cover primary schools and kindergartens) to promote to young people consular protection services provided by our country to Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong, with a view to strengthening their sense of national identity and national pride.

(2) Publicity and promotional activities are always an integral part of the preventive consular protection work, with emphasis on enhancing the public's awareness of outbound travel safety and risk prevention capabilities. While the efficacy of the relevant work can hardly be quantified, stepping up publicity will undoubtedly reduce the risk of accidents for Hong Kong residents when travelling aboard, and safeguard people's lives and property. From 2021 to 2023, the ImmD organised over 70 exhibitions / seminars on consular protection, reaching out to more than 17 000 citizens. In 2024, the ImmD organised a total of 43 exhibitions / seminars, which included a series of publicity activities held in June and December, reaching out to about 21 000 citizens. Besides, the ImmD will also take the opportunity to reach out to the public to understand their views on relevant publicity and promotion work, as well as the AHU's work with a view to further improving service quality.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB206

(Question Serial No. 3409)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the implementation of the 1868 Chatbot in March 2024 (page 595), please provide the following information:

1. Have there been any follow-ups and evaluations regarding the accuracy, stability and responsiveness of the chatbot in handling enquiries or requests for assistance?
2. Are there any plans to expand the service to handle more complex enquiries or requests for assistance, situations straddling across departments, as well as to support multilingual enquiries? If yes, what is the timetable? If no, what are the reasons?
3. Has any cost-benefit analysis been conducted on further expanding the service scope of the 1868 Chatbot, and what are the manpower and resources that could be saved as a result?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 73)

Reply:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) introduced the 1868 Chatbot in the Immigration Department Mobile Application on 18 March 2024 to further enhance the convenience for Hong Kong residents in distress or in need of assistance outside Hong Kong to contact the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU). Through the 1868 Chatbot, Hong Kong residents can also access general information about seeking assistance outside Hong Kong. The 1868 Chatbot supports traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese and English, while operating on natural languages processing and machine learning technologies to analyse users' text input, with a view to understanding their needs and providing the most relevant information. Assistance seekers / enquirers may also contact AHU staff via the "Contact Staff" function in the 1868 Chatbot if necessary by choosing either "Message Staff" or "Talk to Staff".

As at the end of February 2025, the 1868 Chatbot received a total of 4 088 requests for assistance / enquiries, approximately 80% (3 259) of which were handled by itself. By effectively providing the necessary basic information to assistance seekers / enquirers through the chatbot, the AHU can devote its resources on dealing with requests for assistance that are

growing in number and diversity, as well as other more urgent cases, thereby providing practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents.

The ImmD will continue to let the 1868 Chatbot learn various questions from the users through conversations and provide suitable answers, with a view to improve its accuracy. At the same time, the ImmD will also keep abreast of times by utilising technology and review various work procedures from time to time to further enhance the emergency support services provided to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB207

(Question Serial No. 3410)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As stated in the Budget Speech (paragraph 242), the Government has all along endeavoured to deliver more efficient public services to citizens through leveraging technology, streamlining processes and driving the digital transformation of public services. In this process, public services related to 1868 may gradually be replaced by artificial intelligence, automation technology, etc. In this connection, how will the Government handle the work adjustments of the existing hotline staff to better utilise these human resources, or provide training to facilitate their transfer to other government departments?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 74)

Reply:

The Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) has been providing all practicable and appropriate support as well as assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong 24-hour round-the-clock. Examples of assistance provided by the AHU include assisting in the applications for replacement of travel documents, providing urgent assistance to Hong Kong residents hospitalised / suffering from illnesses or those who have encountered traffic accidents outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents arrested / imprisoned outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents stranded outside Hong Kong due to major emergency incidents to return to Hong Kong safely, and assisting Hong Kong residents who had become victims of incidents outside Hong Kong, etc. When handling the assistance requests, the AHU will follow up based on the circumstances of individual cases. As the request for assistance cases often involve matters relating to consular protection services provided by our country, as well as immigration related regulations and policies, serving members of the Immigration Service are responsible for managing the 24-hour 1868 hotline service.

The ImmD has been enhancing the AHU's emergency assistance services by leveraging information technology, with a view to further strengthening the support for Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. At present, Hong Kong residents encountering difficulties or requiring urgent assistance outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour 1868

hotline for assistance; call the 1868 hotline using network data or use the 1868 Chatbot via the ImmD Mobile Application; send messages to the 1868 WeChat or 1868 WhatsApp assistance hotlines; or submit an Online Assistance Request Form. Apart from that, before travelling abroad, Hong Kong residents may register their itineraries and contact details using the ImmD's Registration of Outbound Travel Information service to enable the ImmD to disseminate practical information to them by appropriate means as necessary.

The AHU will review the work procedures from time to time, flexibly deploy manpower, and continue to strengthen and maintain close communication with different stakeholders with a view to providing practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB208

(Question Serial No. 3411)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU), would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the respective expenditure in each of the past 3 years;
2. the number of occasions on which officers left Hong Kong to render assistance to Hong Kong residents in need, and the details;
3. the effectiveness of its work; and
4. the upcoming work plan?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 75)

Reply:

(1) The total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value) of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 financial years are as follows:

Financial year	Total annual salary costs in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value
2022-23	\$17.41 million
2023-24	\$19.7 million
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	\$20.28 million

(2) In the past 3 financial years, the AHU sent officers to locations of incidents to render on-site assistance and support to Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong for 7 times in total. The nature of the cases included hospitalisation, traffic accident, and having been lured to Southeast Asian countries and detained to engage in illegal work, etc. with details as follows:

Financial year	Number of times officers were sent out of Hong Kong	Locations involved
2022-23	0	-
2023-24	0	-
2024-25	7	Iceland, Japan, Thailand and Uganda

(3) and (4) Over the years, by maintaining close communication with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions (CDCMs) overseas, and with the comprehensive support from relevant HKSAR Government departments (such as the Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas), the ImmD has been providing 24-hour round-the-clock practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong. The assistance provided by the AHU to Hong Kong residents over the years cover various aspects, examples include assisting in the applications for replacement of travel documents, providing urgent assistance to Hong Kong residents hospitalised / suffering from illnesses or those who have encountered traffic accidents outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents arrested / imprisoned outside Hong Kong, assisting Hong Kong residents stranded outside Hong Kong due to major emergency incidents to return to Hong Kong safely, and assisting Hong Kong residents who had become victims of incidents outside Hong Kong, etc. In fact, the AHU has received feedback from the assistance seekers expressing their gratitude to the assistance provided as well as recognition of the AHU's work. The ImmD will continue to maintain close communication with the OCMFA and the CDCMs to review the services provided and relevant works procedure for continuous service improvement.

Apart from sustaining the efforts in assisting Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong, the AHU will also strengthen preventive work, including increasing public awareness of outbound travel safety and enhancing the AHU's emergency response capability.

The AHU will continue to promote among the public the consular protection work of our country and outbound travel safety through organising various publicity activities in which 1868 Ambassador "Ah Bong", the AHU's mascot, will be presented. At the same time, to broaden the coverage of the audience, the AHU will continue to pay visits to schools (extended to cover primary schools and kindergartens) to promote to young people consular protection services provided by our country to Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong, with a view to strengthening their sense of national identity and national pride.

On enhancing the response capability of the AHU, the ImmD has been offering the training programme of Worldwide Emergency Assistance Services to its staff members. The programme was accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications in January 2023 for inclusion in the Qualifications Register. It covers contents on consular protection, crisis management, first aid, post-crisis / disaster psychological support to assistance seekers, media response skills and other topics. In addition, the ImmD extended the programme in 2024 to cover members of various disciplinary services and other government officers, and renamed the programme as the "Professional Certificate in Worldwide Emergency Assistance Services". The ImmD will continue to strengthen its training to officers sent out of Hong Kong with a view to enhancing their response capability in handling emergencies.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB209

(Question Serial No. 3814)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please advise how the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) promotes among the public the consular protection and services provided by our country, and provide the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of the AHU.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) has been joining hands with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in organising various activities and taking forward publicity work, with a view to increasing the awareness of outbound travel safety of Hong Kong residents as well as their understanding of national consular protection and the work of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU).

To enhance the public's understanding of consular protection provided by our country, the ImmD has organised a series of publicity activities in June and since December 2024 respectively, including exhibitions staged in shopping centres across the territory in which 1868 Ambassador "Ah Bong", the AHU's mascot, was presented to promote among the public the consular protection work of our country and outbound travel safety prior to long holidays. The ImmD will also adjust the publicity information based on the latest requests for assistance, such as including additional information on points to note for self-drive tours outside Hong Kong and anti-scam awareness, etc. In addition, in order to widely spread the word about national consular protection, the AHU has stepped up advertising and publicity efforts in popular gathering places and on public transport, and launched various promotional items to make the information on national consular protection and its importance more widely known to the public. At the same time, the AHU will continue to pay visits to schools (extended to cover primary schools and kindergartens) to promote to young people consular protection services provided by our country to Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong, with a view to strengthening their sense of national identity and national pride.

The staff establishment and total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value) of the AHU in the financial year of 2025-26 are as follows:

Year	Staff establishment	Total annual salary costs in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary
2025-26	29	\$20.88 million

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB210

(Question Serial No. 3350)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated in the Programme that “provision of \$14,982,000 under Subhead 202 Repatriation expenses is for the repatriation of illegal immigrants, immigration offenders and convicted criminals in accordance with the relevant immigration legislation. The increase of \$3,237,000 (27.6%) over the revised estimate for 2024-25 is mainly due to the expected increase of repatriation expenses incurred in the removal of unsubstantiated non-refoulement claimants and the anticipated increase in air ticket fees.” In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1). Please set out the number and age profile of illegal immigrants in the past 3 years by country or region.
- 2). Further to the above, what corresponding strategies and measures does the Immigration Department have in place in response to the above situation? What is the earmarked expenditure?
- 3). What was the average cost for successfully removing an illegal immigrant in the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 53)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) intercepted from 2022 to 2024 are tabulated by their nationality as follows:

Nationality Year	Vietnamese	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Indian	Others	Total
2022	335	65	38	35	9	482
2023	378	333	496	83	23	1 313
2024	334	131	118	72	29	684
2025 (as of February)	30	12	15	12	2	71

The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- (2) In response to the illegal entry of NEC IIs into Hong Kong in recent years, the ImmD will continue to conduct in-depth analysis of intelligence, including their places of origin and routing. To tackle illegal immigration with precision, the ImmD will also strengthen intelligence exchange with relevant Mainland and Macao law enforcement authorities, and maintain close contact and undertake joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force. With the concerted efforts of various parties, the number of NEC IIs intercepted has plummeted by over 90% from the peak of 364 in October 2023 to 34 in February 2025.

Meanwhile, the ImmD has stepped up enforcement actions against NEC illegal workers and their employers so as to reduce the economic incentives for NEC IIs to come to Hong Kong. In 2024, the ImmD conducted 13 306 targeted operations against NEC illegal workers, representing an increase of 2% as compared with 13 052 in 2023. During the operations, a total of 444 NEC illegal workers and 146 local employers were arrested. The ImmD will continue to take vigorous enforcement actions against NEC illegal workers in a proactive manner.

The crackdown on and investigation of immigration offences are part of the ImmD's regular enforcement duties, which involve the coordination and collaboration of multiple aspects of work, the ImmD therefore does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved as mentioned in the question.

- (3) The removal of IIs is part of the ImmD's regular removal duties, which involve the coordination and collaboration of multiple aspects of work, the ImmD therefore does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved as mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB211****(Question Serial No. 3324)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Pre-entry ControlControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns the policy purview of the Education Bureau (EDB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the EDB.]

Question:

According to Programme (1), the Immigration Department will continue to provide immigration facilitation in the coming year to support the attraction and retention of outside talent. How many applications were received under the “Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates” (IANG) in each of the past 3 years? How many of them have been approved, are under process, and have been rejected? Of the successful applications, how many were from “non-local recent graduates” and “non-local non-recent graduates” respectively; and how many were from graduates of Hong Kong universities and the Greater Bay Area (GBA) campuses of Hong Kong universities respectively? On average, how many dependants did each successful applicant bring? Will the Government consider regularising the pilot arrangement for including graduates from the GBA campuses of Hong Kong universities under the IANG? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 235)Reply:

The statistics on the applications under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) in the past 3 years with a breakdown by the number of applications received, approved and rejected are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025) (Note 2)
No. of applications received	14 906	25 758	26 185
No. of applications approved (Note 1)	14 189	24 512	24 784
No. of applications rejected (Note 1)	21	17	26

Note 1: Applications approved/rejected may not totally be the applications received in that year.

Note 2: As at the end of February 2025, there were 333 applications pending processing.

The statistics on the successful applicants with a breakdown by their graduation status are tabulated as follows:

Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As of February 2025)
Recent graduates	13 199 (402)	22 333 (988)	23 577 (1 120)
Non-recent graduates	990 (4)	2 179 (89)	1 207 (108)
Total	14 189 (406)	24 512 (1 077)	24 784 (1 228)

Note: Figures in brackets represent the number of graduates from the Greater Bay Area (GBA) campuses included.

In the past 3 years, a total of 13 759 dependants were approved to come to Hong Kong under the IANG, meaning that each principal applicant arrived in Hong Kong with approximately 0.2 dependants on average.

Under the policy direction of GBA development, the Government supports Hong Kong's higher education institutions to continue to actively participate in and promote higher education cooperation in the GBA. It also encourages them to explore more flexible and innovative operation models in running education institutions in the GBA. Currently, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the City University of Hong Kong have established campuses in Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dongguan respectively. In late 2022, the Government introduced a pilot arrangement to include graduates from the GBA campuses under the IANG. As announced in the 2024 Policy Address, the pilot arrangement would be extended for 2 years, with a view to facilitating a comprehensive review of its effectiveness and deciding whether the pilot arrangement should be further extended or regularised.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB212

(Question Serial No. 3386)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the wider use of technology by the Fire Services Department to enhance the efficiency of firefighting, rescue operations and ambulance services (page 232), please provide the following information:

1. For various incident and disaster scenarios (e.g., fire in built-up areas, mountain rescue and the handling of chemical spillage) in the past 3 financial years, the use of technology such as artificial intelligence and big data in analysing the department's emergency response capabilities, including site control and situation handling, and reduction of casualties and scale of property loss so as to make adjustments to the fire safety measures in different areas, as well as the training programmes and exercises for personnel.
2. For the average time taken in respect of turnout after receiving a call and arriving at scene in response to various types of emergency calls in the past 3 financial years, taking into account the relevant incident and disaster scenarios (such as fire in built-up areas, mountain rescue, and the handling of chemical spillage), the use of technology for in-depth analysis for the setting of more precise target response times in various emergencies and disaster scenarios so as to enhance the efficiency in deploying firefighting and rescue personnel and ambulance resources.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 50)

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department (FSD) has all along moved with the times, leveraging innovative technologies to enhance operational efficiency, safeguard public safety, and mitigate risks faced by frontline personnel during firefighting and rescue operations.

In 2024, the FSD announced its Strategic Plan 2024-2026 which, clearly defines 3 strategic objectives in the realm of innovation and technology, that is, "harnessing innovation to enhance the delivery of quality service", "maximising the use of big data analytics to promote strategic decisions and future planning", and "leveraging new and advanced technologies to promote the efficiency of operations and fire protection work".

The FSD has been proactively using big data analytics to support management and policy making processes. To further promote the application of information technology in fire and ambulance services, the FSD uses the FSD Geographic Information System Portal and the FSD Intelligence Dashboard Platform to collate and analyse vast amounts of operational data so as to consolidate the correlations or trends across different operational datasets. For instance, by analysing vegetation fire data from past years, including factors such as time of occurrence, location and weather, the Department can better identify areas with high risk of vegetation fire, conduct on-site risk assessments, and formulate more precise operational deployment plans.

Furthermore, the FSD also utilises the operational data to review and optimise the training and exercises for its personnel. For example, through data analysis, the Department continuously reviews the rescue equipment used by frontline personnel in coping with inclement weather and provides corresponding specialised training for them. Besides, the Department also tailors rescue resource allocation and formulates contingency plans based on regional risk profiles, while collaborating with relevant departments to conduct various types of joint exercises to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Apart from providing emergency rescue and ambulance services to the public, the FSD is responsible for firefighting and rescue on land and sea, as well as handling various types of special service calls, such as traffic and industrial accidents, gas leakages, landslides, flooding, building collapses, attempts to jump from height and malfunctioning lifts. Upon receiving various types of emergency calls, the FSD will uphold its mission of “saving those in distress and protecting the community” and attend the scene immediately.

With respect to setting the response time, the existing performance pledges of the FSD on the graded response time for building fire calls are: (i) fire personnel will arrive at the fire scenes within 6 minutes for 92.5% of such calls in built-up areas; and (ii) fire personnel will arrive at the fire scenes within 9 to 23 minutes for 94.5% of such calls in areas of more dispersed risk/isolated developments. As for emergency ambulance calls, the performance pledge adopted by the FSD is to arrive at scene within the target response time of 12 minutes for 92.5% of the calls. The FSD will continue to maintain the above targets in the coming year.

As regards the use of technology, the FSD will continue to use big data to conduct comprehensive analysis on information and data of fire incidents, building design and relevant inspections so as to keep track of the risks faced by specific areas for better planning and resources deployment, with a view to enhancing the efficiency in deploying firefighting and rescue personnel as well as ambulance resources.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB213

(Question Serial No. 3387)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the Fire Services Department (FSD)'s efforts to strengthen collaboration with district organisations on fire safety issues (page 231), please provide information on the following:

1. The implementation of suggestions that FSD received from and its efforts made in response to District Councils, District Fire Safety Committees (DFSCs) and other district organisations' suggestions on improving fire services facilities, such as installation of additional fire hydrants and improvements to fire services facilities in old buildings and fire escape routes in public areas.
2. The actual situation with respect to strengthening connection and collaboration with DFSCs and other district organisations to formulate and promote community public safety strategy, for instance, whether inspections have been conducted and improvements made on home fire safety of elderly singletons and elderly doubletons, and what are the results of the trainings for volunteers or fire safety ambassadors.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 51)

Reply:

1. & 2. To comprehensively enhance the community's fire safety standards and knowledge of emergency preparedness, the Fire Services Department (FSD) established the FSD Community Collaboration Network (FSDCCN) in September 2022 to forge a closer and more direct communication mechanism with the District Fire Safety Committees (DFSCs) across the 18 districts, allowing more members of the local communities to participate in the formulation and implementation of the FSD's community public safety strategy, as well as to promote fire safety and emergency preparedness education in the community.

Since the establishment of the FSDCCN, the two parties have forged increasingly close collaboration. To further deepen and enhance fire safety in the districts, the FSD proactively implements a "community-based" public safety strategy whereby

the past approach of one-way fire safety education has evolved into a holistic community public safety strategy that emphasises on community engagement and collaboration. In this connection, the FSD has rolled out a thematic website for the FSDCCN, providing information on disaster and emergency preparedness education for the 18 districts, and highlighting the important roles of DFSCs in their respective districts. In addition, the FSD has formulated 4 key performance indicators for public safety strategy, which were implemented in September 2024, as tabulated below:

Measure	Indicator (each district)
1. DFSCs need to conduct joint publicity activities/inspections with the FSD for buildings with potential risks and fire hazards in the district	Twice per year
2. Help residents in need to install stand-alone fire detectors	50 households per year
3. Distribute the “Three Treasures for Fire Protection”	100 sets per year
4. Recruit district residents to become Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responders (FSDCER)	40 persons per year

As of February 2025, significant progress has been made by various districts in meeting the relevant key performance indicators. Major publicity activities and inspections were conducted in 24 buildings, stand-alone fire detectors were installed for 491 households, 1 117 sets of “Three Treasures for Fire Protection” were distributed, and 555 residents were recruited to become FSDCERs.

Furthermore, Divisional Commanders of the FSD, on top of participating in regular DFSC meetings, provide professional advice to the 18 DFSCs under the FSDCCN framework with a view to formulating and implementing district-specific fire safety policies and relevant key performance indicators. They also co-operate with Care Teams and other district organisations to disseminate messages of disaster and emergency preparedness to all sectors of the community.

The 18 DFSCs have formulated a total of 74 key performance indicators related to district-specific fire safety policies. In addition to enhancing the disaster and emergency preparedness in various high-risk areas, the DFSCs also provided emergency preparedness education for different communities in the district (such as the elderly, young people and ethnic minorities), including conducting fire drills and major disaster and emergency preparedness publicity activities for the district’s old buildings and high-risk areas, organising emergency preparedness carnivals and fire station and ambulance depot open days, as well as arranging home fire safety visits for the elderly in the district.

As of February 2025, the FSD, in collaboration with the 18 DFSCs and other organisations, has organised 54 major activities (including fire drills, lectures and various publicity activities), 7 emergency preparedness carnivals and open days, and visited 126 elderly households.

District Councils, DFSCs and other district organisations have long served as communication bridges between the Government and the public. The FSD has always placed great importance on suggestions for improving fire services facilities, and has taken detailed examinations and appropriate follow-up actions to enhance the community's fire safety standards.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB214****(Question Serial No. 3388)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (000) Operational ExpensesProgramme: (2) Fire Protection and PreventionControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Regarding the “Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued” (page 235) in the past 3 financial years, please provide the following information:

1. the number of FHANs issued following inspections conducted in response to complaints and the number of FHANs issued following random inspections initiated by the Department, with a breakdown by types of premises; and
2. the number of FHANs issued that have not been complied with by the specified dates and the average time of delay in such compliance, with a breakdown by types of premises.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 52)Reply:

1. As mentioned on page 235 of the Controlling Officer's Report Head 45 – Fire Services Department, the numbers of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) (other than floating obstructions to means of escape (MOE) and locked exits) issued by the Fire Services Department (FSD) in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

	Year	Industrial	Composite	Domestic	Commercial	Government, institution or community facilities	Total
Number of FHANs issued following inspections in response to complaints	2022	206	794	50	483	7	1 540
	2023	209	1 165	1 659	532	5	3 570
	2024	204	3 406	206	645	14	4 475

	Year	Industrial	Composite	Domestic	Commercial	Government, institution or community facilities	Total
Number of FHANs issued following FSD-initiated inspections	2022	1 348	182	1 665	165	0	3 360
	2023	193	201	1 245	192	1	1 832
	2024	155	2 849	2 041	205	0	5 250

2. In accordance with the existing mechanism, the FSD will conduct on-site inspections after expiry of the periods specified in the FHANs to ensure the FHANs have been complied with. If the fire hazards have not been abated, FSD personnel will follow up and take appropriate enforcement actions, including instituting prosecutions against relevant or responsible persons.

As mentioned on page 235 of the Controlling Officer's Report Head 45 – Fire Services Department, the numbers of prosecutions instituted by the FSD in the past 3 years against relevant persons for FHANs (other than floating obstructions to MOE and locked exits) that have not been complied with upon expiry of the specified periods are tabulated below:

Year	Industrial	Composite	Domestic	Commercial	Government, institution or community facilities	Total
2022	66	10	1	0	0	77
2023	53	19	15	1	0	88
2024	22	226	45	3	0	296

The compliance status of FHANs upon expiry of their specified periods is tabulated below:

Year	Number of FHANs issued	Number of FHANs that have been complied with within specified periods	Number of FHANs that have not been complied with by specified dates	Average number of days taken for compliance after expiry of specified periods
2022	4 900	4 823	77	289
2023	5 402	5 314	88	137
2024	9 725	9 429	296	142

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB215

(Question Serial No. 3389)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Has technology such as big data been utilised to analyse the number of turnouts of various types of emergency vehicles (ambulances, ambulance motorcycles and Rapid Response Vehicles) in each year, including but not limited to the trends of growth, problems arising from the allocation and mobilisation of resources, and the ways for optimisation? If yes, what are the results; if no, what are the reasons?

Has technology such as big data been utilised to analyse the distribution of the number of turnouts of various types of emergency vehicles at different times and on different days (such as working days, festivals, holidays, nighttime, etc.), as well as to grasp the pattern of changes in the demand for emergency service, and the deployment of emergency vehicles, personnel and equipment?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 53)

Reply:

At present, the Fire Services Department (FSD) makes use of big data with the aid of technology to perform continuous analysis and monitoring of the operational data of various types of ambulance vehicles (including the trends of growth, the allocation and mobilisation of resources, as well as the distribution of the number of turnouts in different time periods, etc.) so as to assess the actual circumstances surrounding ambulance service delivery and the impact of different situations on the demand for ambulance service. The FSD will make appropriate assessments through continuous analysis of the changes of ambulance service-related data, and adjust its manpower and ambulance resources accordingly to meet the demand. In addition, the FSD commissioned a consultancy firm in 2021-22 to conduct a comprehensive review and study on the future development of ambulance service, forecasting the demand of calls over the next 10 years starting from 2022 and providing other relevant suggestions, so as to ensure that the Department can meet its performance pledge in each year. Meanwhile, the FSD has also collaborated earlier with a local university to devise an ambulance dispatch simulator to estimate the demand for emergency ambulance service with a view to optimising the deployment and dispatch of ambulances.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB216

(Question Serial No. 4011)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the following information regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for the past 3 years:

1. The number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances conveyed by ambulances (%) in each year;
2. The number of A&E attendances conveyed by ambulances from various districts (with breakdown by District Council district) in each year.

Asked by: Hon LEE Wai-king, Starry (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

1. For the past 3 years, the number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital conveyed by ambulances (%) in each year is set out below:

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As at 31 December 2024)
48.8%	42.8%	40.7%

2. For the past 3 years, the number of A&E attendances at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital conveyed by ambulances from various districts (with breakdown by District Council district) in each year is set out below:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As at 31 December 2024)
Central and Western	1	1	0
Eastern	0	0	0
Southern	2	1	0
Wan Chai	4	4	2

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (As at 31 December 2024)
Kowloon City	33 428	38 542	27 226
Yau Tsim Mong	9 924	10 686	5 142
Sham Shui Po	54	46	27
Wong Tai Sin	29 178	32 841	24 004
Kwun Tong	182	205	135
Tai Po	0	1	1
Yuen Long	0	1	1
Tuen Mun	8	1	4
North	3	0	1
Sai Kung	47	63	43
Sha Tin	62	47	57
Tsuen Wan	9	6	9
Kwai Tsing	1	1	0
Islands	0	0	2
Total	72 903	82 446	56 654

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB217

(Question Serial No. 3436)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service, (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the handling of fire hazard complaints, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. As it is mentioned under Programme 1 that the number of complaints of imminent fire hazards received, the number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices issued and the number of prosecutions instituted increased substantially last year, what were the underlying reasons for this, and what were the conviction rates, as well as the highest, lowest and average penalties for the prosecutions concerned?
2. As it is mentioned under Programme 2 that the number of prosecutions instituted for fire hazards increased from 948 to 4 031 last year, what were the underlying reasons for this, and what were the conviction rates, as well as the highest, lowest and average penalties for the prosecutions concerned?
3. In view of the significant increase in the number of prosecutions under both Programmes, will the Government redeploy manpower to handle the increased workload? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 112)

Reply:

1. For Programme 1, the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2024 saw a substantial increase in the number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued and prosecutions instituted for fire hazards in 2024. This was not only due to the substantial increase in the number of fire hazard complaints received during the year, but also the enhanced law enforcement actions taken in the aftermath of the No. 3 alarm fire at New Lucky House in Jordan in April 2024, where the FSD proactively inspected about 1 000 old composite buildings with relatively high fire risk and took law enforcement actions against the fire hazards identified. Out of the 668 prosecution cases mentioned under Programme 1, the prosecution procedures for 561 cases have been completed, while 107 cases are still being processed. Out of the 561 completed

prosecution cases, 555 resulted in convictions, while the remaining 6 were withdrawn due to reasons such as the defendant’s death or the legal advice from the Department of Justice (DoJ). The overall conviction rate was 99%. The penalties in respect of these prosecutions are tabulated below:

Highest fine (\$)	30,000
Lowest fine (\$)	200
Average fine (\$)	3,383

- Since the No. 3 alarm fire that broke out at New Lucky House in Jordan in April 2024, the FSD has proactively inspected about 1 000 old composite buildings with relatively high fire risk across the territory according to a risk-based principle and took law enforcement actions against the fire hazards identified. Also in 2024, the FSD further stepped up law enforcement efforts against violations of the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B) and instituted prosecutions for violations of the regulations pertaining to fire service installations and equipment. At the same time, the FSD stepped up prosecutions against non-compliance with fire safety directions under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572). Out of the 4 031 prosecution cases mentioned under Programme 2, the prosecution procedures for 2 446 cases have been completed, while 1 585 cases are still being processed. Out of the 2 446 completed prosecution cases, 2 306 resulted in convictions, while the remaining 140 were withdrawn due to reasons such as the defendant’s death or the legal advice from the DoJ. The overall conviction rate was 94%. The penalties in respect of these prosecutions are tabulated below:

Highest fine (\$)	41,440
Lowest fine (\$)	97.7
Average fine (\$)	3,045

- In response to the significant increase in the number of prosecutions, the FSD has strengthened manpower for prosecution through internal redeployment to ensure that all prosecution work can be handled in a timely manner.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB218

(Question Serial No. 3477)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned that equipment such as Diving Support Vessel, fireboats and breathing apparatus will be replaced. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) The specific details of the total estimated cost, the estimated allocation involved and the expected time of completion (including the expected installation completion date and operation commencement date) for the replacement of the aforementioned equipment;
- 2) The expected serviceable lives of various equipment and the amount of resources to be allocated by the Fire Services Department for their system upgrade and maintenance during such periods to ensure their continuous and highly efficient operation;
- 3) Whether relevant training will be provided to ensure that the operating personnel is conversant with the use and maintenance of the new equipment; if yes, please specify the details of the training programmes (including theoretical training and practical operation), the manpower and training expenses involved; and
- 4) How to assess the enhancement in efficiency of rescue efforts to be brought forward by the newly replaced equipment?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 71)

Reply:

1) Information about various replacement items is tabulated below:

Item	Total estimated cost	Estimated allocation	Expected time of completion	
			Expected installation completion date	Operation commencement date
Diving Support Vessel	\$220 million	Procurement of new vessel, related equipment and training	First quarter of 2030	Second quarter of 2030
Fireboat No. 3	\$199 million	Procurement of new vessel, related equipment and training	Second quarter of 2029	Third quarter of 2029
Fireboat No. 5	\$199 million	Procurement of new vessel, related equipment and training	Second quarter of 2029	Third quarter of 2029
Breathing apparatus	\$234 million	Procurement of 1 850 sets of new breathing apparatus, related equipment, spare parts and maintenance parts	Expected to commence full operation in the fourth quarter of 2025	
Portable radio transceivers	\$102 million	Procurement of 3 400 new portable radio transceivers and related ancillary equipment	Expected to commence full operation in the fourth quarter of 2025	

2) The expected serviceable lives and maintenance measures for the items are as follows:

Item	Expected serviceable life	Maintenance measures
Diving Support Vessel	15 years	The Fire Services Department (FSD) will collaborate with the Government Dockyard to carry out maintenance for the fire vessels and will continuously review the resources required to ensure efficiency in marine firefighting and rescue operations.
Fireboat No. 3	20 years	
Fireboat No. 5	20 years	
Breathing apparatus	15 years	The new breathing apparatus come with a 31-month warranty period. Thereafter the FSD will provide in-house maintenance.
Portable radio transceivers	10 years	The new portable radio transceivers come with a 12-month warranty period. Thereafter, the FSD will entrust the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department to be responsible for the relevant technical support and maintenance to ensure their proper operation.

- 3) The FSD will provide adequate training to ensure the personnel is conversant with and able to operate the newly replaced fire vessels and equipment. Details of the training are as follows:

Fire Vessels

In the course of the fire vessel replacement, the FSD will work with the Marine Department to draft the contents of the tender and review the specifications, including training for vessel operation and engine maintenance of the newly procured vessels. The FSD will determine the number and contents of training programmes taking into account factors such as functions of the newly procured vessels, standby water areas, and qualifications required for relevant personnel. The training will be provided by the vessel contractors and no additional manpower resources will be involved.

Breathing Apparatus

To ensure the operating personnel will be conversant with the use and daily maintenance of the new breathing apparatus, the FSD's Breathing Apparatus Unit will provide relevant training and no additional manpower resources will be involved. The relevant qualifications for the breathing apparatus fall under 2 categories, i.e. wearers and technicians. Training for the "wearers" category mainly relates to firefighting and rescue work, while training for the "technicians" category mainly concerns maintenance of breathing apparatus.

Portable Radio Transceivers

The basic operation of the new portable radio transceivers is primarily similar to that of the existing models. The FSD's contractor, pursuant to the contract, will provide relevant training and no additional manpower resources will be involved. The training covers equipment component structure, overview of functions, basic operation and maintenance procedures, so as to enhance the frontline and maintenance personnel's capability in daily operation and maintenance of the new equipment.

- 4) To further enhance marine firefighting and rescue capabilities, the newly procured vessels will be equipped with modernised and advanced fire and rescue equipment, with the speed increased up to 25 knots to enhance operational efficiency.

The new breathing apparatus (compliant with technical specifications in EN137, with chemical, biological and nuclear radiation protection functions) incorporates various technologies, such as aids for strengthening communication among fire personnel under adverse conditions, couplings that allow quick connection/disconnection, and air supply sharing systems for use in emergencies, to help enhance operational efficiency of the fire personnel.

The new portable radio transceivers have been upgraded in terms of water and dust resistance, battery life and signal sensitivity, providing frontline personnel with more reliable communication devices and network to support their rescue work in different environments.

To ensure the above vessels and equipment maintain optimal performance, the FSD will continuously monitor their performance and operational efficiency after the items concerned are put into operation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB219

(Question Serial No. 3478)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

To enhance fire safety awareness and the emergency preparedness of the public, the Fire Services Department launched the Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responder Scheme (the Scheme). Participants will receive training on fire prevention and emergency preparedness, as well as cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator to help safeguard community safety. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) What are the annual estimated expenditure and staff establishment involved in the Scheme?
- 2) As of February 2025, how many people in each District Council district of Hong Kong have participated in the Scheme and completed the training to become a Community Emergency Responder? What is the expected number of new members to be recruited in each of the next 3 years? Please provide the statistical data by district, with a further breakdown by age groups (e.g. aged 18-30, 31-50 and above 51).
- 3) What is the average cost for each Community Emergency Responder? What indicator(s) does the Bureau use to evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme?
- 4) Is there a validity period for the Scheme membership? How are the emergency response skills of the Scheme members maintained?
- 5) Does the Scheme cover ethnic minorities or persons with disabilities? If yes, in what languages or barrier-free forms are the teaching resources available? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 72)

Reply:

- 1) To keep pace with the ever-changing Hong Kong society, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has in recent years proactively implemented a “community-based” public safety

strategy. The “Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responder (FSDCER) Scheme” was launched on 14 December 2024 to consolidate and optimise the existing “Fire Safety Ambassador” and “Building Fire Safety Envoy” schemes, which have been implemented for years, with an aim to further enhance the fire safety awareness and emergency response capability of the general public.

The Public Safety and Communication Division (PSC) under the FSD is responsible for formulating strategies on public safety promotion and education, establishing close ties with media organisations, co-ordinating the dissemination of information on the FSD’s social media platforms and at incident scenes, and co-ordinating the implementation of various community emergency preparedness programmes. The FSDCER Scheme is one of the programmes being implemented by PSC staff. The FSD has deployed existing manpower to implement the Scheme, and the estimated expenditure on the Scheme’s activities and its promotion in 2025-26 is about \$210,000.

- 2) As of February 2025, a total of 555 individuals from all 18 districts across the territory have completed the relevant training. The breakdown by age groups is set out below:

District Council district	Number of members aged 6-11 (young members accompanied by parents)	Number of members aged 12 or above
Central and Western	-	11
Eastern	-	9
Southern	7	84
Islands	-	47
Wan Chai	-	11
Sham Shui Po	-	22
Wong Tai Sin	-	30
Kwun Tong	-	23
Sai Kung	-	13
Kowloon City	1	46
Yau Tsim Mong	-	49
Sha Tin	-	15
Yuen Long	-	47
Tuen Mun	1	35
Tai Po	-	34
North	-	33
Kwai Tsing	-	22
Tsuen Wan	-	15
Total	9	546

In 2025-26, the FSD will actively recruit interested individuals from all 18 districts across the territory to participate in the Scheme, while encouraging regular public-facing organisations and institutions to join. In parallel, the FSD will provide training to volunteers for the 15th National Games with an expected 1 600 volunteer leaders to be appointed as FSDCERs. The FSD aims to train 5 000 FSDCERs in 2025.

- 3) The FSD has allocated existing resources to implement the Scheme and has trained about 180 fire personnel as instructors of the Scheme. Moreover, the FSD has already set a performance indicator for the Scheme, that is, to train 5 000 FSDCERs in 2025.
- 4) Participants who complete both e-learning and practical training and pass the assessment may be appointed as an FSDCER by the FSD, with their qualifications remaining valid permanently. The FSD will maintain the emergency response skills of Scheme members by inviting them to participate in activities such as district promotional activities on emergency preparedness, large-scale emergency response drills, provision of assistance to members of the community and post-disaster recovery.
- 5) The Scheme welcomes participation from Hong Kong residents aged 12 or above, while children aged 6 to 11 may join as young members accompanied by their parents. The FSD will continue to promote the Scheme to people of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Currently, the training videos and handouts are mainly available in Chinese, with some English translation. The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on participants who are ethnic minorities or persons with disabilities.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB220

(Question Serial No. 3483)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding ambulance service, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. For 2025, it is estimated that the number of emergency calls will further increase but the calls per ambulance will decrease, will the Government explain the underlying reasons?
2. Please provide a breakdown of the number of vehicles held, the number of serviceable vehicles, the average ages and the average kilometres travelled by each type of ambulance;
3. Of the estimated additional 186 posts shown in the size of the establishment for this year, how many of them are under the ambulance stream? Of the estimated 95 posts to be reduced in 2026, how many of them concern ambulance staff?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 114)

Reply:

1. The Fire Services Department (FSD) will increase the number of ambulances in 2025 to enhance its capability in meeting any sudden increase in demand for ambulance services (for instance, an epidemic outbreak). As set out in the table below, the increase in the size of ambulance fleet is greater than the increase in the total number of calls, hence resulting in a decrease in the average number of calls handled per ambulance.

	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
Number of emergency calls	784 243	792 900
Number of hospital transfer calls	38 567	38 600
Total number of calls	822 810	831 500
Fleet size of ambulances	473	514
Calls per ambulance	1 740	1 618

2. The information on ambulance vehicles in the FSD as at 28 February 2025 is tabulated below:

Ambulance vehicle	Number of vehicles	Number of serviceable vehicles @	Average age of vehicles (years)	Average distance travelled^ (km)
Frontline ambulances*	460	397	3.48	79 309
Hospital Transfer Ambulances	16	14	1.38	18 618
Other supporting vehicles#	63	55	3.27	34 172

@ Number of serviceable ambulance vehicles, excluding the number of vehicles undergoing factory repairs (including corrective maintenance, accident repairs and preventive maintenance) on 28 February 2025 (provisional figure).

^ Average kilometres travelled as at 31 December 2024 (provisional figure).

* Frontline ambulances include town ambulances, light ambulances, cross country ambulances and mini ambulances.

Other supporting vehicles include Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycle, Rapid Response Motorcycle, Rapid Response Vehicle, Mobile Casualty Treatment Centre, Paramedic Equipment Tender and Infection Control and Critical Care Transfer Ambulance.

- Regarding the ambulance stream establishment, the FSD expects a net increase of 44 posts in 2024-25, as well as a reduction of 1 post and deletion of 4 time-limited posts upon their expiry in 2025-26.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB221

(Question Serial No. 3816)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Fire Services Department mentioned that it will continue to enhance the efficiency of firefighting, rescue operations and ambulance services through the wider use of technology. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) Please provide a breakdown of the technology projects (such as AI mobilising system, fire service drones and thermal imager) planned to be introduced this and next year and specify their respective procurement and development costs (such as software licences, hardware procurement and maintenance contracts), expected quantifiable performance indicators, and implementation timetable;
- 2) Whether priority will be given to locally researched and developed technologies, such as solutions provided by start-ups in the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park? If yes, what proportion of the estimates does that account for?
- 3) Whether training courses have been arranged to allow frontline personnel to adapt to a technology-oriented work mode so that the service quality remains unaffected by skill disparity? If yes, please provide the number of course hours, the mode of teaching (such as virtual reality and on-site drills), the source of instructors (such as in-house experts and external consultants) and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 73)

Reply:

- 1) The Fire Services Department (FSD) has all along moved with the times, leveraging innovative technologies to enhance operational efficiency, safeguard public safety, and mitigate risks faced by frontline personnel during firefighting and rescue operations. The technology projects planned for introduction by the FSD in 2025 and 2026 include:

Technology project	Cost	Expected benefits	Tentative implementation schedule
New artificial intelligence-assisted image analysis system for mountain search and rescue	About \$4.7 million	Image examination speed is 10 times faster to enhance the efficiency of search and rescue operations	To be put into service in the first half of 2025
Introduction of drones with higher payload and the application of artificial intelligence-assisted automated drone dock	About \$2.1 million	Maximum payload increased from 2 kilograms to 30 kilograms to transport more supplies for supporting operational needs Automated drones can assist in the early detection of vegetation fires and vessel fires in typhoon shelters	To be put into service in the second half of 2025
Compact-sized indoor firefighting robot	About \$1.62 million	Can be operated in tighter spaces to reduce the risks faced by frontline personnel in firefighting operations	To be put into service in the first half of 2026

- 2) The innovative technologies used by the FSD have mainly been developed in collaboration with local innovation and technology enterprises. For instance, the “Mountain Rescue Mobile App” launched at the end of last year and the aforementioned “new artificial intelligence-assisted image analysis system for mountain search and rescue” are both solutions developed in collaboration with start-ups in the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park. In the past 3 years, the number of contracts awarded to local start-ups through tendering procedures for new equipment and relevant technology projects accounted for about 40% of the total contract value of relevant projects.

- 3) The FSD will train members through different means on the use of the latest technologies that have been newly developed or introduced, to ensure that frontline personnel are fully proficient in their use before they are launched. The FSD also arranges for members to attend innovation and technology training programmes organised by the Civil Service College every year to enhance their understanding of intelligentisation and informatisation. As for the use of big data analytics, the FSD has developed over 100 dashboards, covering various aspects of work such as operation, fire protection and staff management, allowing different levels of the management to perform data analysis and monitor the performance indicators. When setting up the dashboards, FSD’s Systems Managers and Analysts/Programmers will provide detailed explanation and training on the use of dashboards to different levels of the department’s management.

The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the training hours and expenditure for frontline personnel adapting to a technology-oriented work mode.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB222

(Question Serial No. 3913)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Control and Enforcement

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned under the Programme that the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) prevents and detects the smuggling of contraband, including narcotics, firearms, strategic goods, dutiable commodities, articles which infringe copyright or trade descriptions, and any other articles the importation or exportation of which is prohibited by law, through actions at control points and regular land and maritime patrols within the territory of Hong Kong; as well as administers two regulatory regimes for the Money Service Operators and for the Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones. In this regard, please inform this Committee of the following:

1). It is expected that upon the commissioning of Terminal 2, C&ED will deploy additional manpower to carry out inspections. What are the manpower expenditures involved? Is it necessary to hire additional manpower? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

Following the commissioning of the Three-Runway System and Terminal 2 at Hong Kong International Airport, the related passenger facilities will commence operation by phases based on passenger traffic demand. As the manpower required in each phase varies, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) will review its manpower needs in a timely manner to ensure that there will be sufficient manpower to cope with the relevant work. In 2025-26, C&ED's estimated expenditure under the Programme "Control and Enforcement" is \$4,797 million, involving an estimated number of 6 158 posts. As carrying out customs clearance and enforcement work to facilitate efficient cross-boundary passenger and cargo flows constitutes part of the work of the Department, it is difficult to quantify the expenditure separately.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3727)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Control and Enforcement

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has served as the World Customs Organization (WCO) Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Region from 2024 to 2026. What are the specific details of C&ED's work plan during the tenure? What are the specific details of the resources required by C&ED for the operation of the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region during the period, including the number of staff provided, the ranks and establishment of the staff involved as well as the associated expenditures on emoluments and fringe benefits? In view of the HKSAR Government's current requirement for all departments to reduce their recurrent expenditures, will C&ED meet the expenditure related to the Secretariat Office by deployment of staff or reduction of other departmental resources? If yes, what is the related plan? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 61)

Reply:

During its two-year tenure (2024 to 2026) as the World Customs Organization (WCO) Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Region, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has been actively driving regional development agendas, co-ordinating regional affairs, leading members in addressing various challenges and facilitating the formulation and implementation of regional strategic plans, in a bid to foster mutual co-operation among members of the A/P region in striving to combat illegal activities of transnational criminal syndicates and facilitate the logistics, economic and trade development in the region, thus assisting Hong Kong to better play its role as a super-connector and a super value-adder.

The specific work plan of C&ED includes the organisation of around 20 international or regional conferences, workshops, joint enforcement actions and capacity building plans. In 2024, C&ED hosted a series of regional conferences. Apart from the regular A/P Regional Contact Points Meeting and the Regional Private Sector Group - Asia Pacific Meeting, other thematic co-operation meetings were also held, covering areas such as intelligence exchange, combating illicit cigarettes, canine enforcement, anti-money laundering, and risk management and intelligence analysis. These meetings gathered representatives from around the world to communicate and exchange views on relevant issues. The focuses of

2025 are the organisation of the WCO A/P Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference, as well as meetings and co-operation programmes on Authorized Economic Operators, data strategies, e-commerce, Smart Customs, and the protection of the environment and wildlife, with a view to fostering connections among law enforcement agencies in the A/P region, and promoting trade facilitation measures and development in the region.

Through the Youth Ambassadors Programme for the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region, C&ED also provides opportunities for young people (including members of the Customs Youth Leader Corps) to participate and assist in the events organised by the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region, aiming to develop promising youth leaders with social responsibility, national identity and international perspective.

There are currently 11 posts in the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region of C&ED, of which 9 are internally deployed to the Secretariat Office within C&ED while only 1 Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise and 1 Assistant Superintendent of Customs and Excise are newly created time-limited posts for 2 years (2024 to 2026) to cope with the work of the Secretariat Office. The total additional expenditure on emoluments incurred as a result of the creation of the 2 time-limited posts for the period is \$7.73 million. Details of the posts in the Secretariat Office are as follows:

Rank	Number
Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise	1
Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1
Assistant Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1
Senior Inspector of Customs and Excise	2
Inspector of Customs and Excise	3
Senior Customs Officer	1
Customs Officer	1
Personal Secretary I	1

C&ED will flexibly deploy internal resources as circumstances require and mobilise other Customs officers in a timely manner to assist in various activities organised by the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the A/P Region.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB224****(Question Serial No. 3728)**Head: (31) Customs and Excise DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (2) Anti-narcotics InvestigationControlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (CHAN Tsz-tat)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

“Etomidate”, commonly known as “space oil”, has become the most popular new drug in the territory recently. The Security Bureau has listed etomidate and its three analogues (metomidate, propoxate and isopropoxate) as dangerous drugs since 14 February this year. In this regard, what are the specific crime data on “space oil” including the numbers of abusers, the age groups of abusers, the numbers of persons arrested for selling “space oil”, the quantities seized and the amount of money involved in the past 2 years?

After the listing of “space oil” as a dangerous drug, what are the specific plans and measures to combat “space oil”?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 63)

Reply:

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has been striving to combat all kinds of drug trafficking activities and timely adjusts enforcement strategies to cope with the challenges posed by emerging drugs or substances of abuse. The relevant figures of “space oil drug” detected by C&ED in the past 2 years are as follows:

	2023	2024
Number of cases	1	19
Quantity seized	309.8 grams	23.5 kilograms
Number of persons arrested	1	15
Total value of dangerous drugs (HKD)¹	\$15,490	\$13 million

¹ In terms of the prevailing market value of the drugs seized

According to the statistics compiled by the Central Registry of Drug Abuse under the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB), the number of reported abusers of “space oil drug” across the territory in 2023 was less than 5 and that in 2024 was 300, of which 226 were young abusers under the age of 21.

C&ED has stepped up enforcement efforts and adopted a holistic approach in combating “space oil drug” at the levels of import, distribution and retail. Regarding the interception at boundary control points, C&ED has also strengthened its intelligence analysis and risk management in order to select cargoes and passengers for examination precisely. Besides, etomidate, the main active ingredient of “space oil drug”, has been added to the databases of “Raman spectrometers” and “ion scanners” to enhance detection capability. C&ED will continue to strengthen intelligence exchange and co-operation with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies. In the light of the drug trafficking trends, C&ED will formulate targeted plans and conduct joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a timely manner to enhance enforcement effectiveness.

In addition, C&ED has been working closely with ND of SB in striving to strengthen anti-drug publicity. We also send officers to deliver anti-drug talks at schools and organise diversified anti-drug publicity and education programmes through Customs YES to further remind the public of the harmful effects of “space oil drug” and its regulation by legislation.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB225

(Question Serial No. 3460)

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain Eddie LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Among 14 search and rescue or law enforcement operations conducted by the Government Flying Service (GFS) in 2024, a total of 4 out-of-pledge cases were recorded due to various issues. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. For the 4 out-of-pledge cases in 2024, what were the respective durations of the delays? What was the duration of the longest delay?
2. How were the statistics on out-of-pledge cases for 2024 as compared to that of 2023?
3. Out-of-pledge was recorded in a law enforcement operation due to aircraft and/or equipment unserviceability. What were the details of the incident? What was the duration of the delay in arriving at the scene eventually?
4. Was unserviceability of aircraft and/or equipment in the above operation unforeseeable and not preventable with repair and maintenance?
5. Regarding the above incident, what measures does the GFS have in place to avoid unnecessary delays in its operations as far as possible?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

1. The 4 cases mentioned in the question comprise 1 law enforcement operation that was delayed by 5 minutes due to equipment unserviceability; and 3 search and rescue (SAR) operations delayed by 33 minutes, 43 minutes, and 65 minutes respectively, as the incident were located at the South China Sea which is more than 265 kilometres away from Hong Kong and extra further navigation planning, refuelling and deployment of additional crew was needed due to the complexity of the operation. Nevertheless, the Government Flying Service (GFS) successfully completed its missions in the 4 cases above, with the persons in distress rescued and no casualties. The above 4 cases involved peculiar circumstances and they only accounted for about 0.15% of the overall call-outs for flying operations received by the GFS in 2024. For the vast majority of its flying operations, the GFS arrived at the scene within the time pledged.

2. The GFS's flying operations are affected by various external factors, such as weather conditions, complexity of the missions, etc. The lead time of each operation from the time of the call-out to arrival at the scene cannot be directly compared. Generally speaking, the performance of the GFS in 2024 was similar to that of 2023, with its staff arriving at the scene within the time pledged for the vast majority of its flying operations.

3 to 5. In 2024, there was only 1 law enforcement operation which was delayed by 5 minutes due to unforeseen aircraft communication equipment failure, and the problem was promptly resolved. To reduce delays in law enforcement operations in the future, the GFS will increase the frequency of inspections on communications equipment and enhance inventory management for early detection of potential equipment problems and ensuring swift responses to emergencies. The GFS will continue to maintain its fleet in accordance with the strict guidelines set by aircraft manufacturers for repair and maintenance of aircraft parts, with a view to providing safe and efficient flying services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB226

(Question Serial No. 3729)

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain Eddie LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please set out the specific details of the aerial photography operations conducted by the Government Flying Service in the past 3 years, including the number of aerial photography operations conducted each year, the subject and nature of the shoot for each aerial photography operation, and the cost incurred (the manpower required, the fuel consumption and the relevant repair and maintenance) for each aerial photography operation.

Will the Government consider switching to the use of unmanned aircraft for aerial photography operations? If yes, what is the plan? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 65)

Reply:

In the past 3 years, the aerial photography support provided by the Government Flying Service was in accordance with the request of the Lands Department (LandsD) in relation to its aerial survey work. The aerial photography work was conducted at various flying altitudes in Hong Kong. The aerial photographs taken were used for map updating, emergency survey, evidence gathering, work planning, change detection, etc. The frequency of the relevant operations and the average expenditures in the past 3 years were as follows:

Year	Frequency	Total annual flight hours	Average expenditure per trip (\$)
2022	42	99.10	42,400#
2023	34	91.30	56,420*
2023	33	93.1	69,850^

#It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost (in terms of average cost per flight hour) of \$17,970 in 2022.

* It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost (in terms of average cost per flight hour) of \$21,010 in 2023.

^It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost (in terms of average cost per flight hour) of \$27,740 in 2024.

Currently, the LandsD also makes use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for aerial surveying. As UAVs have shorter effective flight duration and lower permissible flight altitude, they are mainly used for aerial photography of smaller areas. For aerial photography of larger areas and of longer durations, the GFS will continue to deploy fixed-wing aircraft to support the LandsD's aerial surveying in accordance with its requirements.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB227

(Question Serial No. 3726)

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Has the Government set development goals and plans for the AMS Cadet Corps (AMSCC) in the coming 3 years, as well as targets and plans for recruiting new members? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons? Which organisations does the authority plan to collaborate with to explore and identify opportunities for recruiting cadets, and what are the details of such cooperation?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 60)

Reply:

Since its establishment in 2011, the AMSCC has been committed to equipping cadets with basic first aid, healthcare and hygiene knowledge, as well as providing national security education and discipline training to nurture youths aged 12 to under 18. In addition to the above training, AMS is strengthening efforts to arrange exchanges and visits to the Mainland for cadets. These activities aim to deepen cadets' understanding of the country's development and achievements, foster patriotism, and broaden their horizons.

AMS has adopted a variety of strategies to recruit young people into the AMSCC, including organising first aid and health seminars, setting up booths in shopping malls, etc. To further enhance school-based promotional activities, AMS launched the "School-based Cadet Platoon" programme in the 2024-25 school year. The cadet platoons are named after their respective schools and aim to develop students' basic medical first aid knowledge. Young people aspiring to a career in the medical profession can receive basic medical first aid and discipline training by joining these school-based cadet platoons. AMS will continue to strengthen its communication and collaboration with educational organisations, in order to both recruit more secondary school students to join the AMSCC, as well as actively promote the "School-based Cadet Platoon" programme and strive to establish cadet platoons in more secondary schools.

Through its Volunteer Team, AMS has also built an interactive network with various organisations to deliver social services. Subject to resource availability, AMS will

collaborate with other youth organisations to develop cross-disciplinary activities and trainings (such as first aid training, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation techniques, etc.). These efforts aim to create synergies while encouraging and attracting more young people to join the AMSCC.

Furthermore, AMS will continue its cooperation with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Saint Francis University and Tung Wah College, and through the “Health Awareness and Promotion Programme for Youth to U” programme, provide cadets with additional knowledge and experiences related to the medical professions. The aim is to foster cadets’ interest in pursuing careers in public healthcare and make the AMSCC into a "little cradle" for nurturing future medical professionals.

It is expected that with these measures, AMS can recruit 700 new cadets annually in the coming 3 years.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB228

(Question Serial No. 3919)

Head: (168) Hong Kong Observatory

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Radiation Monitoring and Assessment

Controlling Officer: Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (Dr CHAN Pak-wai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

- a) In response to the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima of Japan, the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) stated that it would continuously monitor the radiation level of sea water samples in local waters. However, the estimate for radiation monitoring and assessment in 2025-26 decreases by 4.6%. What are the reasons for that? Will it affect the accuracy of radiation monitoring?
- b) Given the colourless, tasteless and odourless nature of radiation, the HKO organises the Gamma-Go programme to enhance public education on radiation, as part of the safety plan in preparation for major emergencies. What are the details of and number of participants in the Gamma-Go programme? Has the HKO considered expanding the scale of the Gamma-Go programme to engage the general public for popularising science and addressing extreme incidents, thereby enhancing public awareness and reducing the potential spread of panic in the event of an incident? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

- a) The total estimated expenditure for 2025-26 under the “Radiation Monitoring and Assessment” programme is slightly lower than that for last year. This is mainly attributed to the difference in instruments requiring replacement compared with last year, leading to a decrease in the corresponding one-off expenditure. As for the monitoring of sea water samples in local waters, there is no reduction in the estimated expenditure and the accuracy of radiation monitoring will not be affected.
- b) The Gamma-Go workshop is a STEM activity organised for schools by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), aiming to enhance students’ understanding of radiation through lectures and practical activities. Since its launch in 2021, an average of about 25 workshops have been held annually, with the participation of about 550 students each year.

Apart from Gamma-Go, the HKO has also made other efforts in popular science education to enhance public awareness on radiation. These include setting up booths at various public events (such as the HKO Open Day) to display the portable measurement device used in Gamma-Go and explain its principle and application to the public. The HKO also publishes on its website popular science articles and educational videos on topics such as radiation basics and radiation monitoring and protection.

- End -