

LCQ4: Safety of banana boats and jet-skis

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

Every summer, many people flock to the waters of Hong Kong to engage in a variety of water sports activities, including riding on a banana boat towed by a speed-boat and jet skiing. It is learnt that accidents involving such recreational activities which resulted in deaths and injuries have occurred from time to time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of water sports accidents involving banana boats and jet-skis recorded by the authorities in the past five years;

(2) whether the existing legislation governing vessels regulates jet-skis and non-mechanised vessels such as banana boats; if so, of the details, including the specific requirements under the various provisions and whether such facilities are required to be registered or licensed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the relevant government departments have conducted inspections regularly on the safety of banana boats and jet-skis; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the Hon Holden Chow's question is as follows:

(1) From 2012 to 2017, the Marine Department (MD) recorded three accidents involving jet-skis but none involving banana boats (neither banana boats nor pleasure vessels (PVs) towing them).

(2) According to Schedule 1 to the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Certification and Licensing) Regulation (Cap. 548D), jet-skis fall within the vessel type of open cruiser under Class IV vessels (i.e. PVs), for which an Operating Licence (OL) for Local Vessel and a valid third party risks insurance certification must be obtained. An operator must also possess the Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency for operating jet-skis. To enhance safety, the MD has endorsed corresponding conditions in the OLs for jet-skis, including permitting the use of jet-skis at daytime only, requiring operators to wear lifejackets and jet-skis to be installed with an

equipment commonly known as "kill cord" (i.e. device enabling the engine of a jet-ski to automatically switch off once the operator leaves his seat).

OLs of local vessels are not required for non-mechanised inflatable vessels including banana boats. However, a PV owner who intends to use his vessel for towing inflatable vessels should submit an application in writing to the MD. Upon approval of the application, the MD will endorse the OL of the PV concerned with conditions pertaining to the towing of inflatable boats, including keeping proper lookout on the PV; providing every person on board the vessel being towed with a seat and an independent handhold; and ensuring that each of these persons shall wear a life-jacket.

(3) Apart from conducting regular inspections of PVs, the MD also steps up its patrols and launches anti-speeding operations at popular sites for water sports during the summer. In the summer of 2017, 1 100 inspections of PVs and nine anti-speeding operations were conducted. On the publicity and education fronts, to remind the public to pay attention to their own safety and that of others when taking part in water sports or waterborne recreational activities, the MD collaborates with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Hong Kong Police Force in organising the Water Sports Safety Seminar annually, with a view to raising public awareness of water sports safety. The MD also distributes pamphlets on water sports safety to the public with advice on the safe operation of banana boats and jet-skis. As summer draws near, the MD will continue with its relevant work in patrol and education to ensure water sports safety.

Red flag hoisted at Turtle Cove Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 9) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Turtle Cove Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 3.3 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$720,000 at Hong Kong International Airport on May 6.

Customs officers inspected an air mail parcel from the United States on May 6 and seized about 3.3kg of suspected cannabis buds in the carton box.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (May 8) arrested a 32-year-old man suspected to be involved in the case in Shek Kip Mei.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe to perform “The Palace of Eternal Life” \(with photo\)](#)

The Chinese Opera Festival, an annual event presented by the Leisure and

Cultural Services Department, will open in June with "The Palace of Eternal Life" by the Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe.

The Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe debuted the full-length version of "The Palace of Eternal Life" in Shanghai in 2007. Last year, the Troupe once again staged this classic production across major Chinese cities with its full cast and received remarkable acclaim.

The gem of Kunqu opera is now being brought to the stage in Hong Kong with a full cast of elite actors from different generations and cohorts. Kunqu opera virtuoso Cai Zhengren will lead a cast of younger actors including Li An, Shen Yili, Yu Bin, Luo Chenxue and Ni Xuhao to perform in this opening programme.

The timeless legend "The Palace of Eternal Life" is an everlasting classic in Kunqu opera. The work, written by dramatist Hong Sheng of the Qing dynasty, was inspired by "The Song of Everlasting Regret" by poet Bai Juyi of the Tang dynasty and the Za opera work "The Firmiana Rain" by dramatist Bai Pu of the Yuan dynasty. Based on the beautiful yet sad love story of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang and Imperial Concubine Yang Yuhuan, the play is known as a grand epic of Chinese opera. The Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe arranges and presents the play in four chapters to feature two parallel plot lines: the love between the Emperor and Lady Yang, and the An Lushan Rebellion. While the four chapters are relatively independent, they also dovetail with one another. Collections of body movements, vocal styles and music are created that are not performed in usual excerpt performances, demonstrating creativity in every aspect. The Troupe strives for perfection and excellence in terms of showmanship, music, set design, lighting, costumes, styling and props in this rerun.

Details of the performances are as follows:

June 14 (Thursday), 7.30pm

Chapter One "The Pledge"

Main cast: Ni Xuhao and Luo Chenxue

June 15 (Friday), 7.30pm

Chapter Two "The Dance of the Rainbow and Feathery Garments"

Main cast: Li An and Shen Yili

June 16 (Saturday), 7.30pm

Chapter Three "The Mutiny at Mawei"

Main cast: Cai Zhengren (former part)/Li An (latter part) and Yu Bin

June 17 (Sunday), 2.30pm

Chapter Four "The Lover's Reunion"

Main cast: Li An and Yu Bin

All performances will be staged at the Grand Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Tickets priced at \$150, \$250, \$350 and \$450 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk).

For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.cof.gov.hk.

Talks and a meet-the-artists session will be held for this programme. Admission is free, and limited seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Talks on the Art of Kunqu Opera" (in Cantonese) featuring seasoned Kunqu opera researcher Cheung Lai-chun as speaker will be held at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, with details as follows:

May 12 (Saturday), 3pm

Topic: The Jealous Imperial Concubine – An Analysis of "Complaints in the Pavilion" from "The Palace of Eternal Life"

May 19 (Saturday), 3pm

Topic: The Emperor's Tears – An Analysis of "Lamenting the Statue" from "The Palace of Eternal Life"

A meet-the-artists session, "Our Journey through 'The Palace of Eternal Life'" (in Putonghua), featuring Cai Zhengren, Li An, Shen Yili, Yu Bin, Luo Chenxue and Ni Xuhao will be held at 7.30pm on June 13 (Wednesday) at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The moderator will be Chinese opera researcher Chan Chun-miu.



LCQ9: Attracting overseas technology talents to come to Hong Kong for career development

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Ting-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology has said that the development and retention of technology talents is one of the key foci in the Policy Address published in October last year, and the Government will introduce measures to attract talents from top universities and research institutions overseas to come to Hong Kong for career development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) regarding the various admission schemes for non-local talents, of the respective numbers of applications received and, among such applications, the respective numbers of those made by technology talents and the respective numbers and percentages of their applications approved, in each of the past 10 years; the current number of technology talents who were admitted to Hong Kong and have now acquired the Hong Kong permanent resident status, and whether it knows, among these talents, the number of those who are currently living in Hong Kong for most of their time and still engaging in technological research;

(2) whether it has assessed the number of technology talents needed by Hong Kong in each of the coming five years; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that and whether it will conduct such an assessment expeditiously; and

(3) of the latest position of the implementation of the various measures for attracting technology talents to Hong Kong (including the Technology Talent Scheme and the pilot fast-track admission scheme for technology talents); whether the Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology will further review the existing policies relating to the admission of technology talents, and formulate targeted policies to facilitate this type of talents to come to Hong Kong for career development, with a view to further attracting technology talents to Hong Kong gearing to the needs arising from innovation and technology development in the territory; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Security Bureau, our reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the Immigration Department (ImmD), the numbers of applications received and approved under the General Employment Policy (GEP), the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMP) and the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme in the past 10 years are set out at Appendix 1. The numbers of applications approved under the above schemes with breakdown by industry/sector are at Appendix 2. Technology industries and sectors including academic research and education, biotechnology, information technology, manufacturing industry and telecommunications etc. are covered. However, the ImmD does not maintain other breakdown figures requested in the question.

(2) and (3) Technology talent is involved in various industries, coupled with the rapid development of technologies, it is difficult to forecast the number of technology talents needed in the future. However, it is clear that Hong Kong needs to attract and nurture technology talent to promote the development of innovation and technology (I&T). The Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address in October 2017, to establish the Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology, personally led by herself, to examine and steer measures in the eight areas of I&T development, which include pooling together technology talent.

Technology Talent Admission Scheme

Currently, there is intense global competition for technology talent with aggressive measures to attract these talents. At the same time, the local technology sector has expressed concern over the shortage of local technology talent in certain specific areas and the lead time needed to admit technology talent from outside Hong Kong. To address these concerns, the Government will introduce a three-year pilot Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS) to provide a fast-track arrangement to admit overseas and Mainland technology talent to work in Hong Kong.

The pilot TechTAS will, as a start, be applicable to tenants and incubatees of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) and the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport) that are engaged in the areas of biotechnology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, robotics, data analytics, financial technologies and material science. Each eligible technology company/institute may apply for quota to admit overseas/Mainland technology talent to work for it on research and development (R&D) in the above areas. In its first year of operation, the TechTAS will admit a maximum of 1 000 persons from overseas/Mainland. Each eligible company/institute may be allotted with a quota to admit not more than 100 persons per year.

The HKSTPC and the Cyberport will receive and examine the quota applications, and provide recommendations to the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC). The applicant company/institute would need to demonstrate the basis of the quota requested (e.g. for a new setup or for expansion of

its R&D programme). It would also need to demonstrate that talent with the relevant skills, knowledge or experience is short in supply or not readily available in Hong Kong, and hence the concerned positions cannot be fully taken up by the local workforce. Having considered comments from the HKSTPC / the Cyberport, the ITC will decide on the quota allotment.

Each quota is valid for six months. Companies/institutes allotted with a quota should sponsor individual non-local persons to apply to the ImmD for employment visa/entry permit to come to Hong Kong for R&D work in the companies/institutes. This has to be done within the quota validity period and in accordance with the specifications pertaining to the job positions set out for the quota (including main job duties, academic requirements, technical skills, relevant experience and remuneration package). Persons admitted under the TechTAS should be degree-holders in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) from a well-recognised university. Work experience is not compulsory for those with a Master's or doctoral degree, while those with a Bachelor's degree only should possess a minimum of one year work experience in the relevant technology area.

To facilitate nurturing of local technology talent, for every three non-local persons admitted under the scheme, the technology company/institute allotted with a quota under the TechTAS would need to employ one new local full-time employee plus two local interns. All these local employees should be engaged in technology-related work. The full-time employees should possess at least a Bachelor's degree while the interns can be undergraduates, graduates or post-graduates.

The pilot TechTAS has its merits. By allotting applicant technology companies/institutes with a quota, it will provide certainty for them to proceed with their recruitment and business plan as soon as possible. Besides, to safeguard local work opportunities, the TechTAS still requires these companies/institutes to demonstrate at the quota application stage that talent with relevant skill, knowledge or experience is short in supply or not readily available in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, by doing away with the requirement to demonstrate local recruitment failure each and every time the companies/institutes seek to bring in talent through the GEP or the ASMTP, the arrangement could help save their time and resources needed for recruitment, and effectively streamline the actual admission procedure and shorten the processing time, thus allowing the talent to be in position to commence R&D work the earliest possible.

Moreover, by expediting the procedures for an individual to obtain the visa/entry permit, the chance of such talent being poached to work elsewhere could be minimised.

In addition, the "3:1+2" non-local to local employment requirement would provide more local job opportunities and help nurture our local talent effectively. In brief, the pilot TechTAS would help attract talent from different parts of the world, encourage cross-fertilisation of local and non-local talent, and hence contribute to Hong Kong's technological development.

Our target is to start receiving application in June 2018. We will review the design and impact of the pilot scheme in a timely manner.

Technology Talent Scheme

In addition, we have set aside \$500 million under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) for a five-year pilot Technology Talent Scheme to nurture and bring together more technology talent. The scheme comprises the Postdoctoral Hub Programme which will provide funding support to the ITF recipients as well as incubatees and I&T tenants of the HKSTPC / the Cyberport to recruit up to two postdoctoral talent for R&D work. The ITF will provide a monthly allowance of \$32,000 for each postdoctoral researcher for up to 24 months. The concerned researcher must possess a doctoral degree in a STEM-related discipline from either a local university or a well-recognised non-local institution. This includes local talent having obtained a doctoral degree outside Hong Kong and non-local talent having admitted to Hong Kong through the TechTAS. We are working on the operation details of the programme with a view to launching it in the third quarter of 2018.