

Missing woman in Sau Mau Ping located

A woman who went missing in Sau Mau Ping has been located.

Jiang Hui-mei, a Mainland woman aged 38, went missing after she left her residence in Lok Wah South Estate on May 8. Her family made a report to Police on May 11.

The woman returned to her residence yesterday (May 24). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

LCQ19: Community isolation facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Judy Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

With the epidemic in Hong Kong having been brought under control gradually, some community isolation facilities (CIFs) have been suspended or have ceased to operate. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current total number of CIFs (including the facilities which have been suspended or have ceased to operate), and set out by name of such facilities their respective service targets and utilisation rates; whether it has plans to change the uses of those facilities which have ceased to operate; if so, of the details;

(2) of the current number and utilisation rate of those quarantine facilities dedicated for inbound foreign domestic helpers (FDHs), as well as the lowest and highest fees charged for the relevant facilities; whether it has assessed if the number of such facilities is sufficient to meet the demand; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the details; whether it will consider turning some of the CIFs with relatively low utilisation rates into quarantine facilities dedicated for FDHs, and allowing employers of FDHs to rent the relevant facilities at reasonable prices for use by FDHs whom they have employed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as the typhoon season will soon begin in Hong Kong, whether it has reviewed the pre-typhoon preparatory measures and drainage systems of various CIFs, as well as carried out repair and maintenance works for the facilities which have been suspended or have ceased to operate; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Security Bureau (SB), Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and Development Bureau (DEVB), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Judy Chan is as follows:

(1) In the light of the fifth wave of COVID-19, the Government will, depending on the health risk, care needs and transmission risk in the household, make arrangements for infected persons according to the multi-tiered triage and treatment strategy for suitable treatment and isolation. Asymptomatic patients who require no medical support but have to be isolated somewhere other than their household due to their care needs or household environment will be arranged to be admitted to community isolation facilities (CIFs) to reduce the risk of transmission. Besides, persons who have entered Hong Kong from overseas and are tested positive at the airport or designated quarantine hotels (DQHs) generally will be admitted to CIF hotels to undergo isolation. Having regard to the development of the epidemic and cost-effectiveness, the Government is focusing on utilising the Penny's Bay CIF and one CIF Hotel. The remaining CIFs at Tsing Yi, San Tin, Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Fanling, Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long have been put into standby mode. As the epidemic has not yet come to an end, the Government still needs to reserve these CIFs so as to ensure that Hong Kong can cope with a possible sixth wave of epidemic if it arrives.

(2) Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the Government has arranged for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to come to Hong Kong in a gradual and orderly manner on the premise of guarding against importation of infected cases, so as to meet the need of local families for FDHs. Since March 1, 2022, FDHs coming to work in Hong Kong may be admitted to a DQH as with other inbound travellers from overseas, instead of having to be admitted to a designated quarantine facility for FDHs as before. The arrangement provides greater flexibility for FDH employers to make the most appropriate quarantine arrangement for FDHs. Meanwhile, to meet the demand, the Government has gradually increased the number of DQH rooms from around 6 000 at end-March to around 22 000 at present, with over half of the DQHs providing rooms with a standard rate of under \$800 per night. According to the room-booking statistics provided by the hotels, as at May 23, the overall booking rate for May and June is around 65 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. The Government will closely monitor the supply-and-demand of DQH rooms and make adjustments when needed.

(3) To ensure the safety of both users and staff of the CIFs managed by the Government, relevant bureaux and departments including the DEVB, SB, Architectural Services Department, Drainage Services Department, Hong Kong Observatory and related building contractors have formulated severe weather contingency plans and mechanisms for maintaining close communication, inspecting the facilities in CIFs and carrying out improvement/reinforcement works as well as implementing response measures.

Concerning the Penny's Bay CIF that is in operation, staff members have already put in place a contingency plan for adverse weather, including forming an emergency response team to strengthen their ability to cope with the situation concerned. Once there is a forecast of typhoon or adverse weather, corresponding actions will be immediately taken. They include removing or securing outdoor facilities that are not firmly affixed beforehand; arranging cleansing workers to inspect drainage and clear the blockage regularly to prevent flooding; suspending non-essential outdoor work and reminding all staff to put on appropriate protective gears when working outdoors; and monitoring the latest weather/typhoon information and direction so that the staff may consider suspending all admission to and discharge from the CIF in case of extremely adverse weather.

As for the CIFs in standby mode, apart from having members of SB's Anti-epidemic Task Force working on shift to manage the facilities on-site, the contractors of the Department of Health will continue to deploy security personnel and cleansing workers in accordance with the practical need to assist in inspection of the facilities and maintenance work such as cleansing.

[LCQ21: Traffic problems at Pak Lok Path, Tai Wai](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Dominic Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

Pak Lok Path in Tai Wai is a private road belonging to a private housing estate, Pristine Villa, and it also serves as a main access road for daily use by residents near To Fung Shan. It is learnt that the vehicular flow at Pak Lok Path increases drastically every year around Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival as many people go to Ching To Yuen (a columbarium that is still applying for a private columbarium licence) on To Fung Shan for ancestral worship. However, the owners of Pristine Villa have in recent years barred vehicles of non-Villa residents from entering Pak Lok Path during the aforesaid days, seriously affecting nearby residents' ways to get about. Some members of the Sha Tin District Council opine that the Government should explore the possibility of resuming Pak Lok Path. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether there are any precedents of resuming private roads for conversion into public roads; if so, of the number of such roads, and set out, by the name of road, the reasons for resumption and the government departments

responsible for the resumption; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has studied if the owners of Pristine Villa have the right to close off Pak Lok Path and deny access of outsiders; if it has studied and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the legal basis concerned; if the outcome is in the negative, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it has plans to resume Pak Lok Path; if so, of the government department(s) responsible and the details of the relevant work (including the progress in the negotiations with the owners of Pristine Villa); if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will consider doing so; and

(4) as some members of the public are of the view that the operation of the columbarium by Ching To Yuen is the main cause for the aforesaid traffic problems, and this issue has been bothering the residents near To Fung Shan for years, whether the Government will take appropriate actions against this unlicensed private columbarium within a short time, so as to improve the situation?

Reply:

President,

Pak Lok Path in Tai Wai falls within the private lot of the Pristine Villa (Sha Tin Town Lot No. 331) (the Lot). According to the lease conditions governing the Lot, the grantee was required to construct an access road within the stipulated area of the Lot (i.e. the existing Pak Lok Path). Currently, the said road is jointly owned by the owners of Pristine Villa.

In consultation with the Transport and Housing Bureau and the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the co-ordinated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Lee is as follows:

(1) The Government has mechanisms to invoke applicable legislations/provisions to resume private roads when necessary having regard to the circumstances of individual private roads for tackling problems of the private roads concerned, e.g. environmental hygiene, traffic and road maintenance, etc. Since the circumstances of private road resumptions in the past and the departments responsible for the resumptions varied from case to case, the Government does not have complete statistics on the resumption of private roads for conversion into public roads.

(2) and (3) As mentioned above, Pak Lok Path falls within the private lot of Pristine Villa. There is no requirement under the lease of the lot that the grantees are obliged to open Pak Lok Path for public use.

The Government notes that since 2020, during the periods of Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals, the Incorporated Owners (IO) of Pristine Villa would close Pak Lok Path during the daytime, and only allow its residents and vehicles authorised by the IO to use the road. As the traffic problem arising from Pak Lok Path has brought inconvenience to the local community, relevant

government departments have been exploring different solutions. The Transport Department (TD) and other departments concerned have implemented special traffic arrangements in the vicinity of the lower section of To Fung Shan Road during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals, under which the road was converted from one-lane one-way (uphill) traffic to one-lane two-way traffic in order to maintain smooth traffic. In addition, the TD is conducting a study on improving the section of To Fung Shan Road between Chung Ling Road and Pak Lok Path. If improvement works are feasible, uphill and downhill traffic can be routed through To Fung Shan Road without routing through Pak Lok Path after the improvement. Relevant departments will continue to monitor the traffic situation of Pak Lok Path and the effectiveness of the above measures before considering whether resumption of Pak Lok Path is necessary.

(4) According to the information from the FHB, the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630) (the Ordinance) establishes a licensing regime to regulate the operation of private columbaria. Under the Ordinance, there would be a grace period (of nine months beginning on the gazettal date of the Ordinance, i.e. from June 30, 2017 to March 29, 2018) for a private columbarium in operation immediately before the Ordinance came into effect. If such a private columbarium applied for a Temporary Suspension of Liability (TSOL) on or before March 29, 2018, the grace period remains valid during the processing of the application, until it is finally disposed of or withdrawn. During the grace period, the private columbarium concerned may continue to operate without a specified instrument (i.e. a licence, an exemption or a TSOL), but the operator must not sell or newly let out niches.

Ching To Yuen is a private columbarium already in operation immediately before the Ordinance came into effect. It submitted an application for the TSOL before the deadline in accordance with the requirement described above, and is therefore currently under the grace period under the Ordinance. The Private Columbaria Licensing Board is working in full swing to process applications for specified instruments from private columbaria (including Ching To Yuen). It aims to arrive at certain decisions (i.e. giving approval or approval-in-principle to or rejecting the licence/exemption/TSOL applications) by the middle of next year on all applications for specified instruments in respect of the pre-cut-off columbaria.

According to the lease governing the lot of Ching To Yuen, there are restrictions that no human remains should be deposited within the lot and no structures be erected within certain portion of the lot. As such, the columbarium is in breach of the relevant lease conditions. In the event that the licence application from Ching To Yuen is rejected by the Private Columbaria Licensing Board, the Lands Department will collaborate with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to take land lease enforcement actions against the columbarium concerned.

Supply of three storage type electric water heaters and six refrigerating appliances forbidden in HK

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 25) removed three storage type electric water heaters and six refrigerating appliances from the record of listed models under the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Products) Ordinance (the Ordinance). Supply of these products are no longer allowed in Hong Kong with immediate effect.

Details of these products are as follows:

Storage type electric water heater

Importer/ Hotline/ Email	Brand	Model	Reference number
Hang Tat Heating Systems Consultant Co Ltd 2363 2334 sales@berlin1967.com	berlin	NPF-603	E200030
Sunrise Enterprise HK Limited 2690 1865 sunrise@sunrisehk.biz	DEUTSCHOONER	DNP-6.5TS	E190158
Great Rich Trading Company 2471 5990 yunglapsang@gmail.com	MILOBRAT	MBPU-35SIS	E190120

Refrigerating appliance

Importer/ Hotline/ Email	Brand	Model(s)	Reference number(s)
Kelvin Electric Trading Co Ltd 2421 1210 info@kelvinelectric.com	Fisher & Paykel	RF521TLPX6 RF521TRPW6 RF521TRPX6	U1-R160125 U1-R160126 U1-R160127
Dometic Asia Co Limited 2456 5199 info.ap@dometic.com	DOMETIC	DF 1000	U1-R200080
Many Profit Industrial Limited 2422 1244 cs@manyprofit.com	Imarflex	IRF-40K	U1-R200132
Toshiba Hong Kong Limited 2635 9233 lcd@toshiba.com.hk	TOSHIBA	GR-A25HSZ	U1-R210011

The EMSD administers the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme in accordance with the Ordinance and selects samples of the listed models regularly for conducting compliance monitoring tests to check whether they conform with the energy efficiency and performance characteristics submitted to the EMSD. As the test results of the products concerned showed that they failed to reach the relevant energy efficiency and/or performance characteristics, the EMSD has decided to remove these products from the record of listed models.

The EMSD has served notices under the Ordinance to the importers concerned. The importers will publish newspaper notices respectively, announcing the termination of supply of the concerned products.

Members of the public can contact the above importers for enquiries.

LCQ16: Importation of labour

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

Operators of quite a number of industries have relayed that with a shortage of labour in Hong Kong, they have for a long time been facing recruitment difficulties. Moreover, some studies have pointed out that the ageing population and the persistently low fertility rate in Hong Kong have resulted in a continuous decline in the labour force. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the "child dependency ratio" and "elderly dependency ratio" in Hong Kong in each of the past 10 years; whether it has assessed the changes in such ratios in the coming 10 and 20 years, and their impacts on Hong Kong's labour force, society and economy;

(2) of (i) the respective numbers of applications received and approved by the Government for importation of labour at technician level or below (excluding foreign domestic helpers), as well as (ii) the respective numbers of workers involved (with a tabulated breakdown of these two figures by type of industry), in each of the past five years; the number of enterprises involved in such applications;

(3) of the conditions that enterprises in general have to meet at present for applying for importation of labour, as well as the application procedure and the time required;

(4) whether it has assessed if the existing measures relating to application for importation of labour at technician level or below meet the actual needs of Hong Kong's different industries, economy and society; if it has assessed, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it will consider improving the measures concerned; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it has made reference to the policies of other jurisdictions (such as Singapore, Macao and Japan) on importation of labour, and the effects produced by such policies; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the concerned bureaux, I provide a consolidated reply to the Member's question as follows:

(1) The child dependency ratio and the elderly dependency ratio of Hong Kong during 2012 to 2021 are shown in the table below:

Year	Child dependency ratio (Note 1)	Elderly dependency ratio (Note 2)
2012	152	183
2013	149	190
2014	150	198
2015	154	208
2016	155	218
2017	157	228
2018	159	238
2019	160	249
2020	159	262
2021	157	282

Note 1: Child dependency ratio refers to the number of persons aged under 15 per 1 000 persons aged between 15 and 64.

Note 2: Elderly dependency ratio refers to the number of persons aged 65 and over per 1 000 persons aged between 15 and 64.

According to results of the population projections released by the Census and Statistics Department using the mid-2019 population estimate as the base, population ageing is expected to continue. It is projected that there will be a significant increase in the number of deaths, coupled with a decrease in the number of births. Therefore, the child dependency ratio of Hong Kong is projected to decrease gradually, while the elderly dependency ratio is projected to rise continuously in the next 20 years. The projected child dependency ratio and elderly dependency ratio in selected years are

shown in the table below:

Year	Child dependency ratio	Elderly dependency ratio
2026	158	357
2031	144	435
2036	132	483
2041	125	521

In the face of population ageing, the Government will continue to adopt various measures to encourage more people to join the labour market. The Government will also continue to actively invest in education and training to enhance labour productivity.

(2) and (3) Pursuant to the established policy of the Government, employers must accord employment priority to local workers and only employers with genuine difficulties in local recruitment may be allowed to import workers. The Government operates different schemes for employers to apply for importation of workers on account of their actual operational circumstances so as to supplement skills that are not readily available in the local labour market, and sustain the competitiveness and meet the development needs of Hong Kong. Depending on the skill level and/or education requirement of the jobs concerned, employers may apply to the Immigration Department or the Innovation and Technology Commission for admission of professionals, or to the Labour Department (LD) for importation of workers at technician level or below under the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS).

Employers are required under the SLS to launch a four-week open recruitment exercise to accord priority to filling job vacancies with local workers. Upon employers' completion of the above recruitment procedures, the LD will analyse each application so as to assess whether the employer has sincerity to recruit/train local workers, its genuine need for manpower, size of its local workforce, the views of training bodies/professional organisations on the local manpower supply situation of the concerned job title, etc. The LD will then make recommendations and invite members of the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) to give views. The Commissioner for Labour will thoroughly assess various factors and the views and justifications provided by the LAB members, before approving or refusing the concerned applications for importation of labour as appropriate.

The time for the LD to process each SLS application is affected by various factors. In recent years, the processing of most SLS applications has taken about five months.

The numbers of applications received and approved under the SLS by the LD from 2017 to 2021 are at Annex 1. Breakdowns of the numbers of imported workers applied for and approved by industry are at Annexes 2 to 6. The LD does not keep the number of enterprises involved in such applications.

(4) and (5) Relevant government bureaux and departments have been closely monitoring the manpower supply and demand of different sectors, as well as enhancing training and attracting new recruits. On the premise of safeguarding the employment priority of local workers, the Government allows admission of professionals and importation of workers, and will explore with stakeholders the possibility of increasing imported labour on an appropriate and regulated basis, to alleviate the shortage of manpower in individual sectors/job categories. The Government will make reference to the policies of other places on importation of workers when required.