

# LCQ21: Making good use of the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link (SZL) was officially opened on the 30th of last month. There are views that SZL, which straddles the eastern and western sides of the Pearl River Estuary and connects three places, namely Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Zhongshan, is a strong boost to the economic ties, flow of people and exchanges in such aspects as culture and tourism among cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and of great significance in driving the regional integration process. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will consider extending the Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to the Shenzhen Bay Port, which is close to SZL, and at the same time, discuss proactively with the Mainland authorities the expeditious implementation of 24-hour clearance at the Shenzhen Bay Port to facilitate members of the public and visitors to make better use of SZL to travel between Hong Kong and various Mainland cities in GBA;

(2) whether it has studied ways to make good use of SZL to promote the development of the logistics industry in Hong Kong, such as introducing measures to attract companies from regions such as the western part of Guangdong Province and Guangxi Province to use the airport and container terminals in Hong Kong, so as to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub, international maritime centre and international logistics hub; and

(3) of the measures in place to encourage the tourism sector on the Mainland and in Hong Kong to make good use of SZL to jointly develop multi-destination tourism products of GBA cities, thereby promoting tourism development in GBA?

Reply:

President,

The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link (SZL) is one of the major transport infrastructure projects proposed under the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. With a total length of 24 km, the SZL is currently the fifth corridor across the Pearl River Estuary, mainly connecting Shenzhen and Zhongshan which are located on the two sides of the central waters of the Pearl River Estuary. The completion of the SZL will shorten the travel time between Hong Kong and Zhongshan via Shenzhen and help

promote the flow of passengers and freight, as well as economic connections between Hong Kong and Zhongshan and its neighbouring regions.

Having consulted the Security Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) and the Transport Department, our reply to the Hon Kenneth Lau's question is as follows:

(1) "Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" (the Scheme) allows eligible Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) without the need to obtain regular quotas. It facilitates Hong Kong residents' self-driving to Guangdong for business, visiting families or sightseeing on a short-term basis, thereby further making good use of the HZMB and promoting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Since the implementation of the Scheme in July 2023, it has been well received by Hong Kong citizens. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been maintaining close communication with the relevant Mainland authorities to implement enhancement measures in a timely manner, with a view to providing citizens with greater convenience and travel experience. Regarding the extension of the Scheme to other land-based boundary control points, the governments of Guangdong and the HKSAR have agreed to draw on the implementation experience of the Scheme at the HZMB and proactively study the extension of the Scheme to a Shenzhen/Hong Kong land-based boundary control point in due course, such that Hong Kong private cars can travel to and from both the eastern and western parts of Guangdong.

In addition, in view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the HKSAR and Shenzhen Government have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land-based boundary control points. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and HZMB Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance service at respective boundary control points as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

(2) Western Guangdong and Guangxi have always had close economic ties with Hong Kong. Among other things, as the regional logistics hub of the GBA, Hong Kong has all along been one of the major gateways for air and sea cargoes to and from Western Guangdong and Guangxi. In particular, with the commissioning of the HZMB, the driving distance between Hong Kong and Western Guangdong and Guangxi has been greatly shortened, thereby further unleashing the enormous potential for logistics co-operation between Hong Kong and the two places.

For this reason, the Government has proposed in the Action Plan on Modern Logistics Development to further explore the logistics development opportunities in the western part of Guangdong by enhancing multimodal transport measures and making good use of the HZMB, as well as encouraging the industry to collaborate with other cities in the GBA in formulating management standards for logistics services in relation to high-value goods, thereby strengthening the synergistic development of Hong Kong and other cities in the GBA. The Transport and Logistics Bureau also signed the

"Framework Agreement on Deepening Strategic Co-operation for the Guangxi-Hong Kong Task Force on Transport and Logistics" with the Department of Transport of Guangxi in May this year, with a view to strengthening logistics co-operation with Guangxi.

We believe that the SZL can further enhance the transport connectivity between the east and west banks of the Pearl River Estuary and is conducive to strengthening the transport and logistics links between Hong Kong and the western part of Guangdong and Guangxi. It will also have a positive effect on attracting enterprises therein to utilise Hong Kong's comprehensive sea, land and air transportation network for cargo import or export, thereby consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, international shipping centre and international logistics hub. The transport and logistics sectors can make good use of the existing quotas for cross-boundary goods vehicles and select appropriate border control points allowed under the quotas to travel to and from Western Guangdong and Guangxi via the SZL to capture the business opportunities arising therefrom.

(3) The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Culture and Tourism Development Plan for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area respectively promulgated in February 2019 and December 2020 expressly support Hong Kong in developing into an international tourism hub and a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism. The HKSAR Government has been striving to complement the content of the national planning documents, maintaining close communication with the Mainland authorities and encouraging Hong Kong and Mainland tourism trade to utilise the well-developed cross-boundary transport infrastructure and rich tourism resources in Hong Kong in jointly developing multi-destination travel itineraries.

The CSTB provided funding support for the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong to organise visits to the GBA in October and November 2023 to promote business co-operation between the travel trade of Hong Kong and the GBA. The visit in October 2023 focused on the development of tourism resources in western Guangdong through travelling on the High Speed Rail and the HZMB, while the visit in November 2023 focused on the development of new tourism resources related to professional fields such as technology in eastern Guangdong, with a view to attracting more high value-added visitors to embark on GBA multi-destination journeys via Hong Kong. More than 200 representatives from the trade participated in the two visits.

With the opening of the SZL, nearly a hundred representatives from the travel and related trades in Hong Kong organised a visit to Zhongshan via the SZL on June 21, 2024 together with the representative from the CSTB to meet with the Zhongshan Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism Bureau and the local travel trade to explore the development of more multi-destination tourism products connecting different GBA cities through the SZL.

With the continuous enhancement of the transport network covering GBA cities, it is believed that the travel trade will develop more multi-destination tourism products to satisfy market demand.

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## LCQ6: Taxi Fleet Regime

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

â€‹The Government has introduced the Taxi Fleet Regime, with no more than five Taxi Fleet Licences (Licences) intended to be issued. There are views that with a total of 15 applications for the Licences received by the Transport Department, it is clearly an indication of the industry's eagerness to enhance the quality of taxi services through a fleet-based operating model. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council, as some members of the industry have pointed out that even with the issuance of all five Licences by the Government, the number of taxis participating in taxi fleets would merely account for 20 per cent of the total number of taxis in Hong Kong at most, whether the Government will consider increasing the number of Licences in view of the industry's overwhelming response to the Licences; if so, of the details; if not, whether the Government will consider relaxing the cap on the fleet size to enable more taxis to join the fleets and facilitate the scalable operation of the fleets; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has earlier reviewed the overall operation and management of taxis, and introduced a series of measures to enhance the quality of taxi service and promote the healthy development of the trade in the long run. Such measures include the introduction of a taxi fleet regime.

The taxi fleet regime is a new regulatory regime, under which operators may assemble existing taxis to form fleets and apply to the Transport Department (TD) for a taxi fleet licence. The TD will regulate the operation and management of taxi fleets, and specify the devices that are required to be installed on the fleet taxis through licence conditions. These include specifying the requirements in relation to fleet size, age of vehicles and services to be provided by fleet licensees, such as the provision of online booking channels and e-payment means as well as the installation of CCTV systems and technological devices that enhance driving safety in the compartments of the fleet taxis. In addition, the taxis must not be more than three years old when they join the fleets, nor more than 10 years old throughout the license period. We believe that the said requirements will be conducive to ensuring the service quality of taxi fleets, thereby providing passengers with better booking and travelling experiences.

Following the passage of the legislative amendments in relation to the introduction of taxi fleet regime by the Legislative Council last December, the TD commenced the preparatory work immediately and invited applications for taxi fleet licence in mid-April this year. The TD received a total of 15 applications when the application period ended in late May, reflecting a positive response from the trade. The applicants come from a diverse background with members of other transport sectors in addition to the taxi trade.

An assessment panel formed by representatives from the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the TD is assessing the applications received in accordance with the marking scheme. The application results are expected to be announced within this month.

With regard to the question raised by the Hon Frankie Yick, I hereby reply as follows:

As I have just mentioned, the taxi fleet regime a new regime, and it is an important step to foster the improvement of the taxi trade. The Government aims at setting a good example of taxi fleet management through the introduction of this new regulatory regime. By playing an exemplary and leading role in the trade, the taxi fleets will help enhance the overall taxi service quality and image as well as boost passengers' confidence in the taxi services, thereby gradually improving the development prospect for the trade.

To achieve this vision, we believe that a more prudent strategy should be adopted in the initial stage of introducing the taxi fleet regime. Licences shall only be granted to those excellent operators showing a high level of commitment and competence in fleet operations so as to ensure the operation quality of the first batch of taxi fleets, with which the taxi fleet regime will get off to a good start. Therefore, when inviting the trade to apply for taxi fleet licences, we have stated that no more than five licences will be issued under this exercise.

Upon commencement of the taxi fleet services, the TD will closely monitor the operations and service quality of the taxi fleets, and conduct mid-term appraisal of the performance of the fleet licensees. As regards whether more taxi fleet licences are required to be issued in the future, the TD will consider the market situation at the time, taking into account factors such as the demand for fleet taxi services from the public, the services provided by each taxi fleet and the total number of fleet taxis.

As for the fleet size, a mixed or urban taxi fleet is currently required to have 300 to 1 000 taxis, while a New Territories taxi fleet shall have 100 to 350 taxis. The number of taxis under each taxi fleet will be prescribed in the licence issued. If a fleet licensee wants to increase the number of taxis under its fleet, including expanding its fleet size beyond the current limit (i.e. 1 000 taxis for a mixed or urban fleet and 350 taxis for a New Territories fleet), after being granted a taxi fleet licence, it may apply to the TD for licence amendments. When processing the application, the TD will consider such relevant factors as the market demand for fleet taxi services, the standard of the services provided by the taxi fleet, whether the fleet

licensee will be able to give assurance of engaging enough taxi owners to join its fleet, and the licensee's plan of recruiting more fleet taxi drivers, before deciding whether to grant an approval.

Thank you, President.

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## LCQ9: Development of waste-to-energy incinerators

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

The 14th Five-Year Plan on Urban Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Separation and Treatment Facilities Development (the Plan) published by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development in May 2021 points out that it is necessary to expedite the progress of constructing MSW separation and treatment facilities, so as to provide the basic safeguards for achieving waste reduction, resource recycling and innocuous treatment, while stressing the adherence of principles such as co-ordinated planning, site-specific planning, market orientation and multi-party co-governance in comprehensively pressing ahead with the construction of MSW incineration facilities in the key cities of the country including those in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Regarding the development of waste-to-energy (WtE) incinerators, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has discussed with the relevant departments of the key cities in GBA on how to jointly take forward the implementation of the Plan through mutual co-ordination and enhanced collaboration; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as it is learnt that advanced regions are actively deploying WtE incinerators for waste treatment, while the first and second WtE incinerator projects in Hong Kong (i.e. I•PARK1 and I•PARK2) will only be commissioned next year and 2030 respectively, and by then, the MSW incineration capacity of the two projects will reach 9 000 tonnes per day, which is still lower than the current MSW disposal amount of about 11 100 tonnes per day, whether the authorities will compress the process and allocate additional resources to expedite the construction of I•PARK2; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will expeditiously plan and develop a third WtE incinerator

project; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

At present, an average of about 11 100 tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW) are disposed of at landfills in Hong Kong per day. In the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035, the Government sets out the vision to move away from the reliance on landfills for direct disposal of MSW by around 2035. The Government's strategy has two main directions. The first is to mobilise the entire community to practise waste reduction and waste separation for recycling in the upstream to reduce the overall waste disposal amount. The second is to proactively drive the development of downstream waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities for sustainable disposal of the remaining MSW. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is working full steam on developing the modern WtE incineration facilities and food waste treatment facilities, with a view to moving away from the reliance on landfill for direct disposal of MSW and transforming waste into useful energy resources. Regarding the development of modern WtE incineration facilities, the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1 (I•PARK1) currently under construction on an artificial island off Shek Kwu Chau, with target of commissioning in 2025, can handle around 3 000 tonnes of MSW per day. We are also actively planning for the development of the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 2 (I•PARK2), with an expected MSW treatment capacity of about 6 000 tonnes per day. The reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok is as follows:

(1) To take forward the development of modern WtE incineration facilities, on one hand, we have had multiple exchanges with large-scale waste incineration enterprises in different cities in the Mainland to draw on their vast experience of developing incineration facilities in the Mainland, including nine relevant major enterprises from Beijing, Shanghai and the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area (including Shenzhen, Jiangmen, Zhuhai, Huizhou and Foshan), to gather suggestions on construction mode, increasing efficiency and speed, incineration technology and construction of ancillary facilities, etc, for the proposed I•PARK2. Moreover, since Shenzhen is one of the first Mainland cities to achieve treating domestic waste solely by incineration, we have been keeping close contact with the Shenzhen Municipal Government, and exchanging views on expediting the development of the proposed I•PARK2 in Hong Kong with reference to the experience of Shenzhen. The Environment and Ecology Bureau and the EPD have so far made three visits to WtE incineration facilities in Shenzhen to leverage on Shenzhen's fruitful experience.

On the other hand, the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Ecological Environmental Protection Plan" promulgated by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment vigorously promotes the development of a "Zero Waste" Bay Area. With this opportunity, Guangdong and Hong Kong have established a close co-operation and exchange mechanism on environmental issues to jointly explore the capacity and modes for developing a circular economy in the

region, leveraging the competitive advantages of the two places, complementing each other's strengths, and jointly developing green industries, green energy and related facilities.

(2) To promote the development of I•PARK2, we are streamlining procedures and synchronising various work, including investigation, technical assessment, developing reference design, drafting tender documents and undertaking relevant statutory procedures. Moreover, we have had multiple exchanges with major overseas and Mainland waste incineration enterprises on how to accelerate Hong Kong's development of the proposed I•PARK2.

Having consolidated the opinions from the expert team and various large-scale waste incineration enterprises in relation to the actual setting of the proposed I•PARK2 site, the construction period (discounting the circumstances affected by inclement weather) could be approximately shortened from the original estimate of 72 months to 54 months, 25 per cent less or 18 months ahead of the original estimated schedule. With the construction schedule expedited and various advance work synchronised, they expected that the proposed I•PARK2 could be completed about two years earlier than the original estimated schedule. We are also exploring whether financial incentives can be incorporated into the works contract terms to encourage the contractor to expedite works progress.

(3) Apart from constructing I•PARK1 and the proposed I•PARK2, as well as food waste treatment facilities, we will also vigorously promote waste reduction at source and resources circulation, with a view to obviating the need for constructing more large-scale waste incineration facilities. However, to ensure that Hong Kong has the capacity to handle all MSW under all scenarios, we also need to be prepared and plan ahead. Therefore, we are identifying a suitable site in the Northern Metropolis for building an advanced WtE facility to provide, if necessary, the essential waste disposal services for the population thereof in the long run. The specific planning and development timetable for the third advanced WtE facility will depend on the growth of waste generated by population and economic growth in the long run, as well as the amount of waste reduction and recycling. The Government will continue its efforts in promoting waste reduction and recycling and closely monitor the actual situation.

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## **LCQ1: Enhancing stability of power supply systems**

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Chow Man-kong and a reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):



Question:

It is learnt that the frequent occurrence of power supply incidents in recent years has aroused public concern about the stability of the power supply systems of the two power companies and their capability to respond to incidents in a timely manner. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of power supply incidents of the two power companies since July 2021, with a breakdown by cause (e.g. impact of inclement weather, ageing of facilities and human factors) and the respective percentages; in respect of each incident, the district(s) and the number of customers affected, the time taken from the outage to the full resumption of normal power supply, the manpower deployed for emergency repair, as well as the measures taken for the full resumption of normal power supply;

(2) as it is learnt that in the past three months, the power supply system of CLP Power Hong Kong Limited broke down twice when the Thunderstorm Warning was in force, of the contingency measures put in place by the authorities and the two power companies at the present stage to enhance the capability of the power supply systems to withstand the impact of thunderstorms and other inclement weather conditions, and the relevant measures in the long term; the estimated cost of such measures and whether the cost will be passed on to the customers; and

(3) as there are views that with the Government's promotion of the development of digital infrastructure including data centres and the increasing popularity of electric vehicles in recent years, the demand for power in the community is increasing, whether the Government will, apart from urging the two power companies to enhance the capability of their power supply systems to cope with incidents, consider introducing other proposals to enhance the reliability and stability of power supply?

Reply:

President,

A stable and reliable power supply is very important to the daily lives of the public and every level of economic activities in Hong Kong. Recently, there have been a number of voltage dips and power supply interruption incidents of CLP Hong Kong Power Limited (CLP), and the frequency of these incidents has led to concerns about whether CLP's service quality is on the decline. The Government is of the view that CLP needs to examine its company culture and management system for the entire power supply system to identify the root causes of the problem, make fundamental improvements to reduce the chances of similar incidents in the future, and maintain the stable and reliable power supply that Hong Kong has always been proud of.

On this, the Government has requested CLP to allocate resources for an independent consultant. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) will be responsible for engaging an independent consultant to conduct

a comprehensive examination of the causes of all voltage dips and power supply interruption incidents in the past three years and the capability of the entire power system to withstand the impact of external factors, and provide comprehensive recommendations on how to enhance the stability and reliability of the power supply. The Hongkong Electric Company Limited (HEC) has also pledged to take adequate measures to enhance the capability of power supply systems to withstand adverse weather.

In response to the question raised by Dr the Hon Chow Man-kong, my reply is as follows:

(1) From July 2021 till now, according to the reporting mechanism established between the EMSD and the two power companies, there were 26 significant power outage incidents in the power system of CLP, and five for HEC. Members may refer to the Annex for details of each incident.

The causes for power outage incidents are mainly classified into external factors (such as adverse weather and third-party interference) and internal factors (such as equipment fault). Among the 26 power outage incidents of CLP, 10 were caused by external factors, accounting for 38 per cent; 15 were caused by internal factors, accounting for 58 per cent; and the cause of one incident is to under review and to be confirmed by the EMSD, accounting for four per cent. Among the five power outage incidents of HEC, three were caused by external factors, accounting for 60 per cent; and two were caused by internal factors, accounting for 40 per cent.

With a view to restoring power supply as soon as practicable after power outage incidents, the two power companies would assess the situation instantly and deploy suitable professionals to the scene to identify the location of the incident and arrange for repair. The power companies would, based on the actual situations, adopt the most appropriate and effective power supply restoration plan, such as emergency repair, remote switching of alternative power, arranging temporary mobile generators and laying temporary power cables.

(2) Regarding measures in response to the increasingly frequent extreme weather, the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS) visited the two power companies earlier to receive briefings on the relevant work of the two power companies. In response to DEMS' requests, the two power companies have pledged to take adequate measures to enhance the capability of power supply systems to withstand adverse weather. CLP stated that it would: (1) further increase manpower and adopt innovative technology to conduct inspections and maintenance of key facilities; (2) install lightning protection systems on some outdoor power facilities and flood prevention devices in electrical substations, as well as expedite renewal of power supply equipment; and (3) carry out a comprehensive review on management of CLP's power supply system. HEC stated that although most of its high-voltage cables are buried underground and are generally not affected by thunderstorm, in light of the more frequent extreme weather recently, HEC has gradually installed bund walls and flooding alarm/sump pump systems in relevant electrical substations which may be affected.

After the voltage dip incident occurred in CLP's 400kV overhead line power supply system connecting Yuen Long and Shenzhen in the early morning on June 23, 2024, the EMSD immediately followed up with CLP on how to enhance the lightning protection capability of power supply system. In addition, the EMSD has established a task force to solemnly follow up on the improvement measures proposed by CLP, with an aim to mitigating the impact of extreme weather on the power supply system. CLP stated that, with a view to ensuring a reliable power supply during peak demand periods, particularly during scorching summer days with sharply increased demand, CLP will continue to monitor the demand of the power supply system.

Regarding the capital projects of the two power companies to strengthen their power supply systems to withstand adverse weather, the Government has been stringently carrying out the gate-keeping duties under the framework of the Scheme of Control Agreements and scrutinises the capital expenditures of the two power companies to avoid increase in profits through premature, excessive or unnecessary investments, as well as requests the power companies to exercise stringent control over operating costs, with a view to preventing them from passing unnecessary costs onto citizens.

(3) The objectives of the Government's energy policies are to ensure that the energy needs of the community are met safely, reliably and efficiently at reasonable prices, to minimise the environmental impact of energy production and use, and to promote the efficient use and conservation of energy. We keep an open mind to any technically and financially feasible plans which can enhance the reliability and stability of the power supply. In addition to monitoring the performances of the two power companies, we are also actively exploring the enhancement of co-operation with neighbouring regions and the directions of co-operation on zero-carbon energy projects near Hong Kong, as well as identifying more sources of zero carbon energy supplies which will help stabilise tariff in the long run while ensuring stable and clean energy supply for Hong Kong.

Furthermore, the EMSD will continue to monitor the operation of the power companies, including strengthening the routine regulation and inspection of the two power companies' facilities to ensure that the two power companies provide safe and reliable power supply to the public. To further enhance the safety and reliability of the power supply system, the EMSD has requested the two power companies to adopt various innovative technologies to analyse the health conditions of power supply equipment, thereby optimising the efficiency of maintenance work as well as enhancing the reliability of electricity supply.

Thank you.

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# CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 17) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure, outdoor/manual workers, and individuals who are overweight are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon, if possible;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day if feasible. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

â€‹The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15, preferably higher. Reapply every two hours if you stay out in the sun, and after swimming, sweating or towelling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

â€œIf symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

â€œThe public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.