

## LCQ6: Developing island tourism

Following is a question by the Hon Regina Ip and a reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

There are views that Hong Kong has the potential for developing island tourism with its outlying islands boasting beautiful natural scenery, rural landscape, numerous antiquities and monuments, as well as other traditional festive events. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government proposed in the Policy Address delivered last year to re-examine the planning of the ex-Lamma Quarry site, with the relevant study to be completed within this year, of the current progress of the study, and the expected time for publishing the finalised study report;

(2) as it is learnt that the development of outlying island tourism has been hindered due to rather backward infrastructure facilities including piers, roads and mobile communications facilities as well as inadequate hotel accommodation facilities, whether the Government has formulated measures and enhanced planning to expedite the improvement of supporting infrastructure, and encourage investment in hotels and resorts, etc; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government has formulated measures to step up publicity on island tourism; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will formulate such measures in the future?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is rich in natural tourism resources with many outlying islands surrounded by azure and clear water, allowing water activities and island tours. Some islands locating in the northeast part of the New Territories and Sai Kung have been designated as Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark. The Government follows the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development when actively promoting green tourism. The Tourism Commission (TC) has been implementing Yim Tin Tsai Arts Festival and Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival since 2019, featuring an integration of arts with the islands (including Yim Tin Tsai, Sharp Island, Kau Sai Chau and High Island), allowing visitors to experience the natural landscape, history, culture and heritage of Sai Kung Hoi, revitalising the islands as well as the economic activities there. The third edition of Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival will be held at the end of this year. Hong Kong's outlying islands also have rich and vivid resources of the intangible cultural heritage, such as the Tai O dragon boat water parade, Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, etc. We have been encouraging

the trade to utilise these characteristics to develop more related itineraries and tourism products and continue to actively develop and promote island tourism, attracting locals and tourists to explore the scenery and culture of the outlying islands in Hong Kong.

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip, in consultation with the Development Bureau (DEVB), the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), the reply is as follows:

(1) The Ex-Lamma Quarry, which comprises a 20-hectare (ha) platform area, a 5-ha man-made lake, and a 1-kilometre shoreline, is located at the northern coast of Sok Kwu Wan. It is currently used by a non-governmental organisation under a short-term tenancy for non-profit making environmental education and wildlife activity centre. To make the best use and optimise the advantages of the site, the DEVB commenced a review in November last year. The Study will explore to optimise the use of the beautiful environment and man-made lake of the site, nearby villages, hiking trail, seafood street and the water body of Sok Kwu Wan, to develop the area for resort and out-door recreational uses to enhance island tourism. Since such development will need to upgrade the basic infrastructure facilities, we will explore to incorporate accommodation facilities such as resort hotel, high-end camping facilities and low-density residential use so as to enhance the commercial viability and market interest to participate in the development project. We will make recommendations on the direction of development, including land use and development model, within this year.

(2) The Government has been actively developing island tourism. The TC will play a co-ordinating role to facilitate private organisations or individuals to develop various tourism facilities, such as accommodation and dining, etc outlying islands. At the same time, the TC has been co-ordinating and promoting effective use of smart technology by individual bureaux/departments with a view to promoting smart tourism, as well as formulating and implementing measures to enhance visitors' travel experiences and strengthen Hong Kong's competitiveness as a major tourist destination. With respect to telecommunications infrastructure facilities on outlying islands and remote areas, the OFCA has been taking forward the Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas and expediting the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas through subsidies to enhance the overall coverage of mobile network facilities.

The Government is implementing a Pier Improvement Programme which aims to improve the external sea transportation of the remote areas in the outlying islands and the New Territories through the construction or reconstruction of public piers and the upgrading of facilities. The programme currently involves 23 piers, among which one has been completed, 10 are under construction and to be completed progressively from this year, and the remaining are in planning and engineering design stages. The Government has also been striving to enhance the public transport services for accessing to green attractions, including strengthening the kaito ferry services between Sai Kung and Kau Sai Village/High Island; and the new kaito ferry services

between Sha Tau Kok (STK)/Ma Liu Shui/Tai Shui Hang and Lai Chi Wo/Ap Chau/Kat O.

In recent years, the Government has also improved hiking trails on various outlying islands, including Lantau Trail Section 2, Sharp Island Country Trail and the hiking trails in Ngong Ping area, and renovated the Ngong Ping Nature Centre. The improvement works on Lantau Trail Section 3 have also commenced.

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) proposes to make the best use of the natural and historical and cultural resources in the South Lantau (including Cheung Sha, Shui Hau, Shek Pik and Pui O), provide sustainable leisure and recreational facilities with different themes, enhance the land and water transport amenities in South Lantau (including a new pier at Cheung Sha) and provide accommodation facilities at Cheung Sha and Pui O, for example, beach campsite, quality holiday accommodation and glamping site. The CEDD will explore various implementation approaches, including inviting private developers/investors to participate in the projects. The CEDD has commenced a two-month public engagement on May 28 this year to collect views from the public.

(3) The Government actively promotes island tourism through different channels, introducing the distinctive characteristics of outlying islands to visitors. The TC has launched the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme and the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme consecutively to encourage the trade to develop more thematic in-depth tours and tourism products. Locations related to these outlying island tours include marine parks in Hoi Ha Wan and Tung Ping Chau as well as the natural islands such as Sharp Island and Yim Tin Tsai. The Government provided financial support to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong to organise the "Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition" in 2023 to encourage travel agents to design in-depth themed itineraries, including outlying island tour routes. We will continue to encourage the trade to develop more thematic tourism products.

Besides, through its year-round promotional platform "Hong Kong Great Outdoors", the Hong Kong Tourism Board promotes green tourism products under the themes such as hiking and island hopping.

The AFCD has also set up various land and sea tour routes and visitor centres, and promotes related attractions and transport information through social media, Internet and the "Enjoy Hiking" thematic website.

In collaboration with relevant bureaux/departments, we will continue to promote the development of island tourism and utilise the valuable blue and green resources in Hong Kong; thereby implementing "Tourism is everywhere" concept. Thank you President.

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## LCQ5: Civil Service Public Housing Quota Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Lai Tung-kwok and a reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The Government has introduced the Civil Service Public Housing Quota Scheme (the CSPHQ Scheme) to provide junior civil servants and rank and file officers of the disciplined services with the opportunity to move into public rental housing ("PRH") or purchase flats under subsidised sale flat schemes. It is learnt that the CSPHQ Scheme is severely oversubscribed, with the latest number of applicants for the PRH special quota approximately 10 times the quota, and the waiting time even longer than the 5.7 years for PRH general applicants. On the other hand, retired rank and file officers of the disciplined services are unable to move out of their quarters in a timely manner because they have not yet been allocated a PRH flat, which has significantly lengthened the waiting time of existing staff for quarters. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed the impact of insufficient quotas under the CSPHQ Scheme; if so, of the conclusions; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has estimated the numbers of applications for general quota and special quota to be received under the CSPHQ Scheme and the successful rates of housing allocation in each of the coming five years, together with a breakdown by PRH and the Home Ownership Scheme; and

(3) whether it will consider afresh purchasing housing units in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, which are in close proximity to Hong Kong, for allocation to eligible civil servants, so as to alleviate the problem of acute shortage of quota supply under the CSPHQ Scheme?

Reply:

President,

The Civil Service Public Housing Quota (CSPHQ) Scheme is a discretionary housing benefit that is provided not according to the conditions of service. Both the original intent and purpose of the Scheme are not to provide flats in a quantity equivalent to the demand. Eligible junior civil servants and rank and file officers of the disciplined services may apply for public rental housing (PRH) flats, or Green Form Certificates (GFCs) applicable to purchase of flats under subsidised sale flat schemes. Such schemes include the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS), HOS Secondary Market Scheme and Green Form

Subsidised HOS. Whether an eligible officer can be allocated a quota is mainly affected by the number of quota, the choice of estate/district and the officer's relative priority among other applicants.

The replies to the respective parts of the question are as follows:

(1) For junior civil servants and rank and file officers of the disciplined services, apart from the CSPHQ Scheme being provided on a discretionary basis, other discretionary housing benefits include the Non-accountable Cash Allowance (NCA) for a maximum aggregate period of 120 months which is subject to an annual quota of 1 800, and departmental quarters for the disciplined services. Take the cash allowance as an example, at present, generally, eligible officers would be invited to submit applications within one year of attaining the eligibility (i.e. officers on MPS Points 22 to 33 or equivalent with at least three years of continuous service, or officers below Master Pay Scale (MPS) Point 22 or equivalent with at least 20 years of continuous service) and would receive the allowance in the year following the application. Eligible officers may choose to submit applications under an appropriate housing benefit scheme according to their individual circumstances and needs.

The Civil Service Bureau has been maintaining communication with the Housing Department on the number of quota. After balancing various factors, on top of the normal annual quota of 1 000 PRH flats and 500 GFCs, the Subsidised Housing Committee of the Hong Kong Housing Authority agreed to provide additional 250 GFC quota places annually for the eight years from 2020/2021 to 2027/2028, making a total of 750 quota places each year. While the Government understands it is staff's hope to increase the quota under the Scheme, the Government must at the same time consider the keen demand for public housing from the public. Given the current tight supply of public housing, the Government has to strike a balance between increasing quota places for civil servants and public demand.

(2) Eligible civil servants may make reference to the annual circular memoranda issued by the Government and apply for the CSPHQ. The eligibility criteria under the CSPHQ Scheme include years of service, income and family composition, etc. Officers who meet the basic eligibility criteria may choose the year for submitting application according to their individual circumstances (such as their length of service), and they/their family members have to undergo further verification of their eligibility (e.g. compliance with the rules on prevention of double housing benefits and requirements of the Housing Authority). As such, we are unable to provide the estimated number of applications and success rate for the next five years. For reference, in the past five years (i.e. 2018/2019 to 2022/2023), in respect of the General Quota that is applicable to junior civil servants, there were on average about 4 100 applications for PRH quota and about 2 800 applications for GFC quota per year, and the percentage of applicants provided with a PRH quota and GFC quota was 16 per cent and 21 per cent respectively. As for the Special Quota that is applicable to rank and file officers of the disciplined services, there were on average about 3 900 applications for PRH quota and about 500 applications for GFC quota per year,

and the percentage of applicants provided with a PRH quota and GFC quota was 9 per cent and 63 per cent respectively.

(3) The proposal of purchasing housing units in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) cities for allocating to eligible civil servants will bring enormous financial burden to the Government. We have no plan to purchase housing units in GBA cities as housing benefits for civil servants.

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## [Project mBridge reaches MVP stage](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), together with the rest of the mBridge project team (Note 1), announced today (June 5) that Project mBridge has reached the Minimum Viable Product (MVP)(Note 2) stage.

Project mBridge aims to study how central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) and innovative solutions can be applied to solve the key pain points in cross-border payments. Leveraging the feedback and learnings from the pilot conducted in 2022 (Note 3), the project team has continued to develop and enhance the prototype platform in various areas, including technology, legal and governance. In particular, the four founding central banking institutions have each deployed a validating node in their own jurisdictions. In addition, together with the BIS Innovation Hub, a fit-for-purpose governance framework and comprehensive legal framework, including a rulebook, have been formulated, with a view to matching the unique decentralised nature of the platform. Meanwhile, participating commercial banks in the four jurisdictions have used the MVP platform to conduct real-value transactions in preparation for the MVP release.

As the project enters MVP stage, various aspects of the platform will continue to be enhanced, and the participation of both the public and private sectors will be further widened. Against this backdrop, the HKMA, alongside the project team, welcomes the Saudi Central Bank as the next full participant of the mBridge MVP platform.



Given its high compatibility, the mBridge MVP platform could serve as a testbed for add-on technology solutions, new use cases and interoperability with other platforms. In this connection, private sector firms are invited to propose solutions and use cases by completing the [participation form](#) prepared by the BIS Innovation Hub.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "With the collaborative efforts of the central banking community and the private sector, the cross-border payment landscape is undergoing significant development. The HKMA is very pleased to be an active member of this most advanced multi-CBDC exploration of the BIS Innovation Hub and to have contributed to the progression of mBridge to the MVP stage. We cordially invite other central banks peers to join us on this mBridge journey, whether as users to experience the benefits of the platform firsthand, or as co-developers to enhance cross-border payments together."

More information about Project mBridge is available on the [BIS website](#).

Note 1: The mBridge project team currently consists of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) Innovation Hub Hong Kong Centre, the Bank of Thailand, the Digital Currency Institute of the People's Bank of China, the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates, and the HKMA.

Note 2: An MVP refers to a basic version of a product, containing enough features to be launched and used by early adopters. Its purpose is to gather ongoing feedback for further iterative enhancements before entering into the full production stage.

Note 3: More information about the pilot is available on [www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/news-and-media/press-releases/2022/10/20221026-3/](http://www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/news-and-media/press-releases/2022/10/20221026-3/).

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## [Result of the tenders of RMB Sovereign Bonds held on June 5, 2024](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Result of the tenders of RMB Sovereign Bonds held on 5 June 5, 2024:

### Tender Result

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Tender Date : June 5, 2024  
Bonds available for Tender : 2-year RMB Bonds

Issuer : The Ministry of Finance of the  
People's Republic of China  
Issue Number : BCMKFB24001 (Further Issuance)  
Issue and Settlement Date : June 7, 2024  
Maturity Date : March 15, 2026 (or the closest  
coupon payment date)  
Coupon Rate : 2.20 per cent  
Application Amount : RMB 8,739 million  
Issue Amount : RMB 3,000 million  
Average Accepted Price : 100.18  
Lowest Accepted Price : 100.09  
Highest Accepted Price : 100.69  
Allocation Ratio (At Lowest  
Accepted Price) : Approximately 17.45 per cent

#### Tender Result

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Tender Date : June 5, 2024  
Bonds available for Tender : 3-year RMB Bonds  
Issuer : The Ministry of Finance of the  
People's Republic of China  
Issue Number : BCMKFB24002 (Further Issuance)  
Issue and Settlement Date : June 7, 2024  
Maturity Date : March 15, 2027 (or the closest  
coupon payment date)  
Coupon Rate : 2.28 per cent  
Application Amount : RMB 9,624 million  
Issue Amount : RMB 3,000 million  
Average Accepted Price : 100.41  
Lowest Accepted Price : 100.26  
Highest Accepted Price : 101.15  
Allocation Ratio (At Lowest  
Accepted Price) : Approximately 65.00 per cent

#### Tender Result

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Tender Date : June 5, 2024  
Bonds available for Tender : 5-year RMB Bonds  
Issuer : The Ministry of Finance of the  
People's Republic of China  
Issue Number : BCMKFB24003 (Further Issuance)  
Issue and Settlement Date : June 7, 2024

Maturity Date : March 15, 2029 (or the closest coupon payment date)  
Coupon Rate : 2.39 per cent  
Application Amount : RMB 8,908 million  
Issue Amount : RMB 3,000 million  
Average Accepted Price : 100.69  
Lowest Accepted Price : 100.41  
Highest Accepted Price : 102.22  
Allocation Ratio (At Lowest Accepted Price) : Approximately 37.96 per cent

#### Tender Result

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Tender Date : June 5, 2024  
Bonds available for Tender : 10-year RMB Bonds  
Issuer : The Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China  
Issue Number : BCMKFB24004 (Further Issuance)  
Issue and Settlement Date : June 7, 2024  
Maturity Date : March 15, 2034 (or the closest coupon payment date)  
Coupon Rate : 2.45 per cent  
Application Amount : RMB 5,466 million  
Issue Amount : RMB 2,000 million  
Average Accepted Price : 100.88  
Lowest Accepted Price : 100.00  
Highest Accepted Price : 104.88  
Allocation Ratio (At Lowest Accepted Price) : Approximately 6.99 per cent