

# LCQ18: Attracting Mainland business personnel and talents to visit Hong Kong

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

On the 28th of last month, the National Immigration Administration announced the introduction of six policy initiatives on immigration control to facilitate the public and enterprises, including the extension of the period of stay in Hong Kong for holders of an exit endorsement for business visit travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (Endorsement for business visit) to 14 days, and the expansion of the application of the exit endorsement for talents travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (Endorsement for talents) to Beijing, Shanghai, etc, so as to further facilitate business exchanges and talent interactions between the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of persons who came to Hong Kong with Endorsement for business visit in each of the past three years, and the average number of days of their stay;
- (2) whether it has grasped the main purposes of persons who visited Hong Kong with Endorsement for business visit and Endorsement for talents in the past year (e.g. participating in exhibitions, business negotiations and business travel), and the average amount of their spending in Hong Kong; and
- (3) whether it has plans to proactively complement the national policy by providing incentives to attract more high-spending overnight business visitors to Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Mainland authorities announced on April 28, 2024, that with effect from May 6, 2024, the duration of stay in Hong Kong for holders of exit endorsement for business visit travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao would be extended from seven days to 14 days and applications for exit endorsement for business visit would be accepted nationwide at any of the relevant offices across the country, irrespective of applicants' place of household registration or place of residence. In addition, the application of exit endorsement for talents travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao would

be expanded from the Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to Beijing and Shanghai. These enhancement measures will greatly enhance convenience for Mainland businesspersons and traders who travel to Hong Kong for business activities and attract more Mainland talents to gather in Hong Kong for exchanges, thereby reinforcing Hong Kong's unique role as the country's international talent hub and the gateway for talents in the GBA.

In consultation with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), my reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) In the past three years, the numbers of Mainland visitor arrivals on exit endorsement for business visit are as follows:

	Number of Mainland visitor arrivals on exit endorsement for business visit
2021	317
2022	1 961
2023 (Note)	353 909
2024 (January to April)	150 889

Note: Normal travel between the HKSAR and the Mainland has fully resumed since February 6, 2023.

The ImmD does not maintain statistics on the duration of stay of the above Mainland visitors in Hong Kong.

(2) Mainland residents visiting Hong Kong must hold valid Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao, and apply to the Mainland authorities for exit endorsement for travelling to Hong Kong that corresponds to the purpose of their visits. Holders of exit endorsement for business visit travel to Hong Kong mainly for business purpose. The validity period of exit endorsement for business visit is either three months or one year, during which a single journey or multiple journeys to Hong Kong would be allowed with each stay being not more than 14 days.

As for the six categories of eligible talents (namely outstanding talents, scientific research talents, education talents, healthcare talents, legal talents and other talents) in the GBA, Beijing and Shanghai, they may also apply to the Mainland authorities for exit endorsement for talents for travelling to Hong Kong, apart from exit endorsement for business visit. Holders of exit endorsement for talents travel to Hong Kong mainly for exchanges and visits in the fields of scientific research, education, healthcare, law and business, etc. The validity period of exit endorsement for talents is either one year, three years or five years, during which multiple journeys to Hong Kong would be allowed with each stay being not more

than 30 days.

Generally, activities that visitors (including those travelling to Hong Kong on exit endorsement for business visit or exit endorsement for talents) may engage during their stay in Hong Kong include concluding contracts or submitting tenders; examining goods or supervising their installation; participating in exhibitions; participating in business or technology-related visits upon invitation; and attending short-term seminars or other meetings, etc. For details, please refer to the ImmD's website:  
[www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/permmissible-activities.html](http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/permmissible-activities.html).

In order to promote the development of relevant sectors and raise Hong Kong's international profile, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors in June 2022, providing immigration facilitation for visitors participating in short-term activities in designated sectors in Hong Kong. Organisations authorised by the relevant bureaux or departments of the Government can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors and receive remuneration without the need to apply for employment visas from the ImmD. Besides, the DoJ has launched the Pilot Scheme on Facilitation for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong. Eligible persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in arbitral proceedings as visitors and receive remuneration without the need to apply for employment visas from the ImmD. Both schemes cover Mainland residents who meet the relevant eligibility criteria. For details, please refer to the websites of the ImmD and the DoJ:  
[www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/stv.html](http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/stv.html)  
and [www.doj.gov.hk/en/featured/the\\_pilot\\_scheme\\_on\\_facilitation.html](http://www.doj.gov.hk/en/featured/the_pilot_scheme_on_facilitation.html).

The Government does not maintain statistics on the expenditure incurred in Hong Kong by Mainland visitors holding exit endorsement for business visit or exit endorsement for talents.

(3) The aforementioned enhancement measures on exit endorsement for business visit and exit endorsement for talents will help attract more business visitors to Hong Kong. The Government will continue to actively complement national policy and attract more high-end business visitors to Hong Kong through promoting Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism.

The CEDB launched the \$1.4-billion Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions (the Scheme) on July 1, 2023, to provide financial incentives to attract exhibitions of different scales, particularly international trade shows, to be staged recurrently in Hong Kong. International exhibitions attract high-spending business visitors and bring in businesses to such related sectors as accommodation, catering, retail and entertainment. As at April 30, 2024, a total of 73 applications for completed events have been approved under the Scheme, exceeding the target of providing incentives to more than 200 exhibitions over the three-year period of the Scheme on a pro-rata basis. These exhibitions together attracted some 90 000 exhibitors,

including around 39 000 local exhibitors and about 51 000 non-local exhibitors, and over 1.67 million buyers, including around 1.49 million local buyers and about 180 000 non-local buyers.

According to information provided by the CSTB, an additional funding of about \$200 million was allocated to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) in the 2023-24 Budget for stepping up its efforts in securing the staging of more MICE events of various scales and types in Hong Kong in 2023-24 and 2024-25, with a view to attracting more high-value added overnight business visitors. The HKTB has successfully bid, assisted in the successful bidding or subsidised the staging of over 800 international MICE events in Hong Kong, which are expected to attract over 400 000 overnight business visitors and further diversify our visitor source markets.

In the coming year, the HKTB will focus its work on:

- 1) proactively bidding for and supporting the staging of major international MICE events in Hong Kong as well as attracting more small-scale enterprises, international meetings and incentive travels to Hong Kong through various funding schemes;
- 2) launching a new "Hong Kong Incentive Playbook" to present over 100 new and unique incentive travel experiences and team activities as well as producing a dedicated website, a series of themed videos and online training programmes for MICE trade partners;
- 3) stepping up marketing efforts, including partnering with internationally renowned business media to stage A-list international conferences with top keynote speakers in Hong Kong to demonstrate Hong Kong's unique edge as the "World's Meeting Place"; and
- 4) strengthening the "Meet Hong Kong, Meet GBA" promotion through partnerships with international MICE associations and inviting industry leaders in the Mainland to be the HKTB's Hong Kong Convention Ambassadors to continue to showcase the vast opportunities in the GBA and attract more overseas MICE events to be held in Hong Kong for connecting to the GBA markets, thereby further establishing Hong Kong as the MICE hub of the GBA.

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## **LCQ16: Measures of government departments and public bodies to safeguard national security**

Following is a question by the Hon Edmund Wong and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk, in the Legislative

Council today (May 22):

Question:

It has been reported that in recent years, a number of the Director of Audit's reports have pointed out that many government departments have failed to (i) formulate guidelines related to safeguarding national security or (ii) incorporate clauses concerning safeguarding national security in the service agreements they have signed with their contractors. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether various policy bureaux are currently responsible for formulating measures to safeguard national security for the government departments under their purview (e.g. drawing up guidelines related to safeguarding national security and incorporating clauses concerning safeguarding national security in the relevant service agreements); if so, of the measures taken by various policy bureaux to ensure that the government departments under their purview implement these guidelines; and

(2) whether the Department of Justice and the Security Bureau have any supervisory role in the process of formulating and implementing the guidelines related to safeguarding national security by various government departments, agencies, other public bodies and public organisations; if so, of the details; if not, whether a mechanism will be introduced in the future; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

It is the constitutional duty of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to safeguard national security. Article 3 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKNSL) provides that the executive authorities of the HKSAR shall effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for any act or activity endangering national security in accordance with the HKNSL and other relevant laws.

Section 8(3) of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance stipulates that if the law of the HKSAR confers any function on a person (including all government departments, public officers and institutions performing statutory functions), the function is to be read as including a duty to safeguard national security; and accordingly, any person, in making any decision in the performance of the function, must regard national security as the most important factor, and give appropriate consideration to it accordingly, and a reference in any Ordinance in connection with such a function is to be read accordingly.

All policy bureaux and departments (B/Ds) of the HKSAR Government, including each and every public officers serving in B/Ds, must discharge the duty to safeguard national security, which is a continuing duty that subsists throughout every stage of the formulation and implementation of any policies,

programmes, projects and plans. In the implementation of policies, programmes, projects and plans, B/Ds should conduct assessment of national security risks as necessary, which includes considering whether there are needs to establish codes, guidelines and procedures, or implement other measures to safeguard national security (including stipulating any conditions in contracts or agreements, such as incorporating provisions in tender documents and procurement contracts which specify that the Government may, in the interest of national security, disqualify individual tenderers in the procurement and terminate contracts) in order to mitigate national security risks as far as possible. Where necessary, B/Ds may seek advice from the Security Bureau and/or the Department of Justice (DoJ) on specific issues.

The DoJ acts as the legal adviser to B/Ds in the HKSAR. B/Ds may seek advice from the DoJ on legal issues encountered in discharging their day-to-day functions, including that of safeguarding national security. In this regard, the DoJ will provide legal advice to B/Ds from time to time and review the legislative and administrative measures under their purview to determine if they should be amended or supplemented to fulfil the requirement of safeguarding national security, thereby ensuring effective prevention, suppression and imposition of punishment for acts and activities endangering national security.

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## **CEDD to hold slope safety exhibition**

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) will hold the "Learning from the Past and Striving ahead – Hong Kong Slope Safety Exhibition" from May 23 to 26 at Phase 1, Choi Ming Shopping Centre in Tiu Keng Leng, to enhance public understanding of landslide hazards and the importance of slope safety.

There will be display panels introducing slope safety information and interactive games offering souvenirs to participants.

The exhibition will be held between 11am and 8pm from May 23 to 25 and between 11am and 7pm on May 26 on the second floor of Phase 1, Choi Ming Shopping Centre in Tiu Keng Leng. Admission is free. A geotechnical engineer from the CEDD will answer questions from the public on slope safety and maintenance from 11am to 1pm on May 25.

Members of the public can visit the Hong Kong Slope Safety website ([hkss.cedd.gov.hk/hkss/en/home/index.html](http://hkss.cedd.gov.hk/hkss/en/home/index.html)) for information on slope safety.

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# Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (May 22). The arrangements will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

## A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

The following road closure and traffic diversions will be implemented from 6pm onwards:

### 1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the slip road leading to Aberdeen Tunnel will be closed, except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

### 2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the slip road leading to Aberdeen Tunnel will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road, except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

## B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

The following road closure and traffic diversions will be implemented from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

### 1. Road closure

- The slip road connecting Wong Nai Chung Road and Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the slip road connecting Wong Nai Chung Road and Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and Parsee Cemetery;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and

- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of Hong Kong Jockey Club will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

## 2. Traffic diversions

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

## C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

## D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

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## Speech by CE at 8th ICAC Symposium (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the 8th ICAC Symposium today (May 22):

Honourable Deputy Secretary Fu Kui (Deputy Secretary of Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and Vice Chairman of National Commission of Supervision), Honourable Director Zheng Yanxiong (Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Honourable Director Dong Jingwei (Head of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), Commissioner Cui Jianchun (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR), Deputy Political Commissar Wang Zhaobing (Deputy Political Commissar of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison), Executive Director Ghada Waly (Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), Commissioner Woo Ying-ming (Commissioner of ICAC), Consuls-general, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to you all. It is a great pleasure to be here today to open this eighth ICAC Symposium, and to welcome each and every one of you – more than 500 high-profile professionals from 60 jurisdictions from six continents. You are anti-corruption law enforcers and experts, judges, prosecutors, legal practitioners, government regulators and officials, academics and more.

You are here, over these next three days, to hear and consider promising ways forward under the theme of "Charting a New Path to Combat Corruption". You are here, as well, for the 11th Annual Conference of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities.

Despite your wide-ranging backgrounds, your goal is shared: how best to prevent and combat corruption, a problem that impedes the development, stability and well-being of societies and peoples around the world.

This Symposium is co-hosted by Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, the ICAC, and the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities.

As you all know, our ICAC is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. For half a century, the ICAC has championed the fight against corruption in Hong Kong. It has also worked closely with its counterparts around the world to tackle corruption. Indeed, the ICAC currently holds the presidency of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities.

Under the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong

maintains a robust regulatory regime in line with international standards, and is renowned globally for its clean and efficient government, level-playing field for doing business, sound rule of law, a judiciary with independent judicial power, and zero tolerance for corruption. We are also at the forefront of the international fight against corruption.

International surveys consistently confirm Hong Kong's success in tackling corruption. The World Justice Project rated us ninth, overall, in "absence of corruption", out of more than 140 jurisdictions in 2023. Similarly, Hong Kong was ranked 14th out of 180 countries and territories in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index last year. These and other standings underscore Hong Kong's clean governance, as well as the ICAC's laudable anti-corruption efforts.

The people of Hong Kong substantiate these findings. The latest ICAC Annual Survey shows that Hong Kong citizens have a zero tolerance for corruption, with 98 per cent of survey respondents indicating that they had not personally encountered corruption in the past 12 months.

It is a priority of the Hong Kong SAR Government to sustain our pioneering role in combating corruption. We are pleased, and proud, to back the ICAC in widening its international network and co-operating with overseas counterparts.

We are committed, as well, to ensuring that our legal framework and anti-corruption institutions, as well as public and private sector governance, reflect the highest international obligations and standards, particularly those set out in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

China, our country, has designated the ICAC as an authority under the Convention, helping other economies under the Convention develop and implement preventive measures. And the ICAC, in its work as president of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities since 2022, has overseen the Association's membership soar from 120 agencies in different countries and regions to more than 170 now. This phenomenal growth has allowed the Association to extend its work internationally.

In just a moment, the ICAC will conclude the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the UN (United Nations) Office on Drugs and Crime and the anti-corruption authorities of Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

The presence of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, as guardian of the Convention, and the national anti-corruption authorities of various countries here in Hong Kong to finalise bilateral agreements with the ICAC, exemplify the international co-operation and exchange that can make a difference, regionally and globally.

I congratulate the signatories on their impressive progress, and I look forward to more anti-graft partnerships between Hong Kong and other international jurisdictions.

Ladies and gentlemen, corruption knows no boundaries. It is a plague on different economies, institutions and communities. It has a disrupting, and dispiriting, impact on every aspect of people's lives. Everyone here is fully aware of that overwhelming reality, because everyone here is working, hard, smart and relentlessly, to overcome it.

In marking International Anti-Corruption Day, last December, the United Nations reiterated that "only through co-operation and the involvement of each and every person and institution, can we overcome the negative impact of this crime."

And it's why this Symposium was initiated, 24 years ago: to bring economies, governments, institutions and businesses together, imbued with the indomitable spirit that we will – that we must – prevail.

â€‹Your participation in this Symposium speaks of our collective determination.

I'm grateful to the ICAC for once again organising this important international gathering.

I wish you all three days of inspired Symposium sessions and intelligence insights, of rewarding networking and future collaborations.

And when you need a break, Hong Kong is waiting for you. Hong Kong is way more than an international business centre with a clean government. This is, after all, a world city – and the East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. It is a city where you work hard and also play hard.

Enjoy your time in Hong Kong! Thank you.