

LCQ3: Electronic service systems of the Government and public organisations

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

The 2023 Policy Address has announced the establishment of the Digital Policy Office (DPO) by merging the existing Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and the Efficiency Office. On the other hand, it has been reported that recently, system launch failures occurred one after another for electronic service systems of the Government and public organisations (including the mobile applications "Check-in Smart (HKDSE)" and "i-Invigilation (HKDSE)" of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, as well as the intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system "SmartPLAY" of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department), and the relevant organisations would usually explain afterwards that system failures were due to system overload caused by a login traffic far exceeding the expected level during testing. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the existing OGCIO or DPO to be established will, in the light of the expected number of users and the scale of different electronic service system projects of the Government and public organisations, improve the relevant practice guidelines and enhance monitoring by, for example, (i) requiring the contractors concerned to conduct various levels of load and extreme testing and even requiring the engagement of an independent third party for evaluation; (ii) including the past performance of contractors as one of the criteria for tender assessment; and (iii) specifying an incentive and penalty mechanism in the tenders; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as there are views that with the progressive integration of cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the development of the event economy in Hong Kong will induce more non-Hong Kong residents to register or purchase tickets for participation in various activities through electronic service systems of the Government, whether the authorities will consider commissioning the system contractors concerned to launch, in collaboration with large-scale electronic service providers in GBA, the relevant electronic service systems applicable in GBA, so as to achieve the complementarity of advantages; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as there are views pointing out that the co-hosting of the 15th National Games by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in 2025 will pose greater challenges

to cross-boundary interconnectivity in the flow of people, goods, capital and information amongst the three places, and the relevant government electronic service systems (including ticketing systems) must measure up to higher requirements, whether the authorities will expeditiously step up communication and collaboration with the relevant Mainland and Macao authorities and formulate plans to cope with the situation in case of failures of the relevant systems; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), my reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The government information technology (IT) projects mainly serve to meet the service needs of individual departments. Hence, these IT projects are spearheaded by responsible bureaux and departments (B/Ds) to ensure that the development and operation of the systems cater for respective B/Ds' policies and the needs of their public service recipients. To instil greater public confidence in the Government's implementation of digital services, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has since end-2023 strengthened its support to the B/Ds in respect of their governance of IT projects at different levels, by enhancing the departments' risk management mechanism concerning the initiation, development and rollout of the electronic service systems, in order to further improve the stability and security of e-government systems. The support measures include requiring the B/Ds to raise the weighting of technical assessments in tender marking schemes to 70 per cent when procuring system development services for large-scale or high-risk IT projects, and to conduct third-party independent test before launching electronic services to assess system resilience to abnormal or extreme loading as well as cyberattacks.

The recent hiccups in the performance of IT systems upon rollout by individual public bodies show that besides government departments, public bodies must also plan carefully and conduct sufficient testing before launching public-facing electronic services to ensure the secure and stable operation of the system. The OGCIO is actively examining appropriate guidelines and technical support to the B/Ds to strengthen their governance of new IT systems launched by public bodies within their purview, including adequate testing before system rollout.

We are seeking the views and necessary approval of the Legislative Council on the establishment of the Digital Policy Office, which is expected to be in place in mid-2024. This office will continue to undertake the existing functions and work of the OGCIO, including the above-mentioned support to the B/Ds in the governance of their own IT systems projects as well as those of the public bodies under their policy oversight. It will also strengthen its function to steer and guide the B/Ds in responding to the needs and expectations of society in an appropriate manner as we take forward

implementation of electronic government services.

(2) According to information provided by the CSTB, there are at present different service systems in the local market, such as the Urban Ticketing System (URBTIX) operated by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and some privately-run systems, for event organisers to select the suitable ticketing arrangement in light of their programmes, activities and sales strategies. The URBTIX provides a wide range of ticketing channels (including box offices and self-service kiosks, booking hotlines and 24-hour online and mobile application ticketing services) and a variety of electronic payment methods (including credit card, debit card, UnionPay card, Octopus, Alipay, WeChat Pay and the Faster Payment System) to facilitate purchase of ticket by the public and tourists, including tourists from Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area. Tourists from different places can opt for ticket delivery to the Mainland and overseas, or collect them at the URBTIX box offices/self-service kiosks before the performance, after purchasing the tickets online or through mobile application of URBTIX. E-tickets are also available for individual programmes. Some organisers of programmes held in Hong Kong also choose to sell tickets through Mainland sales channels, including online ticketing systems and travel websites.

In addition, to further enhance convenience to Mainland visitors who use our government services, the 2023 Policy Address has set the indicator to provide an option for making payment by Mainland e-wallets for government services commonly used by Mainland visitors (including booking of various leisure facilities) by the third quarter of 2024. This measure will facilitate Mainland residents' purchase of tickets for programmes or activities including different mega events through relevant government electronic systems.

(3) The Government attaches great importance to the preparatory work in Hong Kong for the 15th National Games, the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games. On the part concerning the IT systems of the Games, the National Games Coordination Office (Hong Kong) of the CSTB has already started discussions about the work involved with the General Administration of Sport of China (GASC) and the concerned authorities of Guangdong Province and Macao in collaboration with the OGCIIO. We will formulate practical and feasible implementation plans with regard to the requirements set out in the overall IT plan of the GASC and the actual situation in Hong Kong. We will also arrange system testing in due course, with a view to ensuring that the IT systems and electronic services of the Games, including the network and communication system, competition information system, event management system, etc., will operate smoothly.

LCQ12: Shopping centres in public housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

It is reported that recently, numerous shops have been left vacant in many shopping centres in public housing estates (PHEs) under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), while supermarkets, shops selling daily necessities, etc, have also surrendered their tenancy, greatly affecting the daily lives of the residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on the shopping centres in PHEs under the HA in the past year: (i) the number of shops, (ii) the number of vacant shops, and (iii) the vacancy rate, and set out in Table 1 a breakdown by District Council (DC) district;

Table 1

DC district	(i)	(ii)	(iii)

(2) of (i) the number of vacant shops and (ii) the vacancy rate of the seven shopping centres in PHEs in the Sham Shui Po District under the HA (i.e. (a) Shek Kip Mei Shopping Centre, (b) Ching Lai Commercial Centre, (c) Nam Shan Shopping Centre, (d) So Uk Shopping Centre, (e) Lai Tsui Shopping Centre, (f) Hoi Lai Shopping Centre, Sham Shui Po and (g) Pak Tin Commercial Centre) in each of the past five years, and set out in Table 2 a breakdown by name of shopping centre;

Table 2 Year:

Name of shopping centre	(i)	(ii)
(a)		
.....		
(g)		

(3) as there are views pointing out that high rental is one of the reasons for the many vacant shops in the shopping centres in PHEs, whether the HA has

considered reviewing the mechanism for determining shop rents or lowering the rents to attract new and old tenants; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether the HA will, in view of the rising shop vacancy rates of the shopping centres in PHEs, review the principles for formulating the types of trades and tenant trade mix of the shops in the shopping centres in PHEs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) as some members of the local community in Sham Shui Po have proposed organising crowd-pleasing activities or providing other concessions at the shopping centres in PHEs within the district to attract visits and patronage by more members of the public and create an ideal business environment for the tenants, thereby lowering the shop vacancy rates, whether the HA will consider adopting the relevant proposals; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In response to the questions raised by the Hon Vincent Cheng, our reply is as follows:

(1) As at March 31, 2024, the following information on the shopping centres in Public Housing Estates (PHEs) under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in the past year: (i) the number of shops, (ii) the number of vacant shops, and (iii) the vacancy rate, are set out in Table 1 by District Council (DC) district:

Table 1 Situation of Commercial Premises in PHEs under the HA

	2024			
€€	District	(i) No. of Premises	(ii) No. of Vacant Premises	(iii) Vacancy Rate#
1	Central and Western District	0	0	Not Applicable
2	Wan Chai District	0	0	Not Applicable
3	Eastern District	95	1	0.41%
4	Southern District	151	2	0.67%
5	Yau Tsim Mong District	0	0	Not Applicable
6	Sham Shui Po District	506	42	5.32%
7	Kowloon City District	141	3	2.31%

8	Wong Tai Sin District	200	4	0.99%
9	Kwun Tong District	573	33	3.36%
10	Tsuen Wan District	186	8	2.79%
11	Tuen Mun District	114	7	4.08%
12	Yuen Long District	111	6	1.6%
13	North District	102	2	0.73%
14	Tai Po District	13	1	1.19%
15	Sai Kung District	13	0	0%
16	Sha Tin District	330	30	3.66%
17	Kwai Tsing District	230	16	2.9%
18	Islands District	64	0	0%
Total no./overall vacancy rate	-	2 829	155	2.93%

Vacancy rate is calculated by: total vacant internal floor area/total internal floor area x 100%.

Nevertheless, at the same time, there were new shopping centres completed in various districts. During the past five years, 15 new shopping centres were completed with a total of 296 new shop premises.

(2) As at March 31 each year, (i) the number of vacant shops and (ii) the vacancy rate of the seven shopping centres in PHEs in the Sham Shui Po District under the HA (i.e. (a) Shek Kip Mei Shopping Centre, (b) Ching Lai Commercial Centre, (c) Nam Shan Shopping Centre, (d) So Uk Shopping Centre, (e) Lai Tsui Shopping Centre, (f) Hoi Lai Shopping Centre, Sham Shui Po and (g) Pak Tin Commercial Centre) in the past five years, are set out in Table 2 by name of shopping centre:

Table 2 Situation of Commercial Premises in PHEs of Sham Shui Po District under the HA

Shopping Centre	2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
	(i) No. of Vacant Premises	(ii) Vacancy Rate#	(i) No. of Vacant Premises	(ii) Vacancy Rate#	(i) No. of Vacant Premises	(ii) Vacancy Rate#	(i) No. of Vacant Premises	(ii) Vacancy Rate#	(i) No. of Vacant Premises	(ii) Vacancy Rate#
(a) Shek Kip Mei Shopping Centre	6	5.27%	0	0%	3	1.22%	1	0.38%	1	0.39%

(b) Ching Lai Shopping Centre	1	9.09%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
(c) Nam Shan Shopping Centre	0	0%	6	1.32%	2	2.01%	0	0%	0	0%
(d) So Uk Shopping Centre	4	11.40%	2	5.15%	3	9.89%	3	7.44%	4	10.96%
(e) Lai Tsui Shopping Centre	8	15%	1	1.36%	4	5.90%	4	10.82%	0	0%
(f) Hoi Lai Shopping Centre	8	11.28%	0	0%	0	0%	4	5.13%	3	4.74%
(g) Pak Tin Shopping Centre (Completed in July 2021)	6	4.50%	2	2.26%	3	4%	–	–	–	–
Total no./overall vacancy rate	33	6.88%	11	1.51%	15	3.34%	12	3.45%	8	3.09%

Vacancy rate is calculated by: total vacant internal floor area/total internal floor area x 100%.

(3) It is the established policy of the the HA to let its commercial premises on commercial principles. The rent for both new lettings by way of open tender and tenancy renewal is assessed based on the prevailing market value. In assessing the market rent of the premises, latest market condition, rental information of comparable lettings in the HA and private property market and relevant factors that would affect rental value, such as location, trade designation, size, pedestrian flow of the premises as well as property market condition, etc., will be taken into consideration. If commercial tenants have any views on the assessed rent upon tenancy renewal, they may approach the estate office for discussion. The Housing Department (HD) will keep in view the economic situation and relevant measures of the Government and provide appropriate assistance to the HA's commercial tenants where necessary.

(4) In the letting of commercial premises, the HD will determine the trade mix of shopping centres and the trades of individual shops by taking into account the daily needs of local residents, the surrounding environment of the estates, retail facilities in the vicinity, scale of the shopping centres, retail market condition, technical feasibility, etc. The HD will also keep in view the business situation and trade mix of its shopping centres and adopt flexible letting strategies to refine the trade mix and consider change of trades of individual shops with due regards to market condition, views of local stakeholders and technical viability, with a view to improving the letting rate and providing residents with appropriate and well diversified shopping and service choices.

(5) To enhance patronage and attract visitors, the HD launches various kinds of promotional activities and free parking offers for shopping centres in PHEs from time to time. Promotional activities such as gift redemption, large-scale games, magic shows, clown performances, snacks and game booths, etc., will be arranged during major festivals and special occasions such as Mid-Autumn Festival, Christmas and Lunar New Year. Festive decorations will also be set up to enhance the shopping ambience and boost footfalls. In addition, the HD will set up suitable promotional spots, such as prominent places at entrances and shop fronts of shopping centres to assist shop tenants in distributing or placing promotional leaflets to enhance publicity and disseminate promotional information, with a view to attracting customers. We always welcome good suggestions from local community in order to enhance the attractiveness of our shopping centres in PHEs.

LCQ8: The problem of crimes committed by "bogus refugees"

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Regarding the problem of crimes committed by "bogus refugees", will the Government inform this Council:

(1) among the crimes which occurred in Hong Kong in the past year, of the number of those involving non-ethnic Chinese non-refoulement claimants, together with a breakdown by month, offence and district in which the crime occurred;

(2) as it has been reported that the problem of crimes committed by "bogus refugees" has plagued Hong Kong for many years, and a number of recent gang fights and robberies in busy districts are also related to these refugees, whether the authorities will target those districts with a higher number of crimes committed by "bogus refugees" (e.g. Yau Tsim Mong and Sham Shui Po) by deploying additional police officers on patrol and conducting random checks on suspicious persons, so as to combat crimes and triad activities in such districts; if so, of the manpower arrangements, as well as the major initiatives to be implemented in the future to combat crimes and triad activities involving "bogus refugees"; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it has plans to further shorten the length of stay of non-refoulement claimants in Hong Kong (including enhancing the efficiency in

processing appeal cases related to non-refoulement claims, strengthening communication with the countries concerned to expeditiously verify the nationality and identity of "bogus refugees", and speeding up the repatriation procedure), so as to prevent them from committing crimes in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), the consolidated reply to Dr the Hon Johnny Ng's question is as follows:

(1) According to the Police's record, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences in 2023 and 2024 (as at end-March) is tabulated below with breakdown by month:

Month	Number of persons
January 2023	56
February 2023	53
March 2023	49
April 2023	60
May 2023	48
June 2023	75
July 2023	58
August 2023	76
September 2023	77
October 2023	47
November 2023	81
December 2023	54
January 2024	65
February 2024	47
March 2024	37

The monthly numbers of persons arrested in the above table represent the real-time figures of the corresponding month-end. The numbers of persons arrested may have been updated due to reclassification and readjustment upon the compilation of quarterly or yearly statistics. The figures with breakdown by police region/police district tabulated below are based on the statistics of the numbers of persons arrested after compilation:

Police region/police district	2023	2024 (January to March)
Hong Kong Island Region	150	31
Central District	36	10
Wan Chai District	69	8
Western District	19	3
Eastern District	26	10
Kowloon East Region	41	9
Wong Tai Sin District	12	3
Sau Mau Ping District	10	4
Kwun Tong District	10	1
Tseung Kwan O District	9	1
Kowloon West Region	386	80
Yau Tsim District	192	36
Mong Kok District	61	10
Sham Shui Po District	94	24
Kowloon City District	39	10
New Territories North Region	117	24
Border District	0	0
Yuen Long District	83	21
Tuen Mun District	28	2
Tai Po District	6	1
New Territories South Region	42	6
Tsuen Wan District	11	1
Shatin District	7	2
Kwai Tsing District	14	2
Lantau District	8	1
Airport District	2	0
Marine Region	9	1
Hong Kong overall	745	151

The number of NEC persons on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences, after compilation, is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2023	2024 (January to March)
Shop theft	193	47
Miscellaneous thefts	71	22

Serious drug offences (Note 1)	99	11
Wounding and serious assault	75	10
Criminal damage	33	10
Serious immigration offences (Note 2)	38	5
Burglary	18	4
Others (Note 3)	218	42
Total	745	151
Triad-related	27	5

Note 1: "Serious drug offences" include possession of dangerous drugs exceeding a specified amount (i.e. possession of drugs, such as 5 grams of cocaine/heroin/marijuana, etc.), manufacturing dangerous drugs, trafficking of dangerous drugs, etc.

Note 2: "Serious immigration offences" include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants (IIs), arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person, etc.

Note 3: "Others" include forgery and coinage, offences against public order, pickpocketing, disorder/fighting in public places and possession of offensive weapon etc.

In addition, according to the ImmD's record, the number of NEC persons on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2023	484
2024 (January to March)	73

(2) In the first quarter of 2024, a total of 151 NEC persons who were issued with Form No. 8 were arrested for criminal offences, representing a drop of four per cent compared to that in last year. The criminal offences involved were mainly shop theft, miscellaneous thefts and serious drug offences. Among them, five persons were involved in triad-related cases, accounting for three per cent only. The number of NEC persons who were issued with Form No. 8 and were arrested reduced by 147 and 61 compared to that in 2018 and 2019 respectively, representing a corresponding drop of around a half and 30 per cent, which shows that the situation has improved.

Regarding those triad-related or violent cases and serious offences such as robbery that are of concern, it is imperative for the Police to solve these cases as soon as possible. In May last year, the Police upgraded its Crime Wing Working Group on NEC Involvement in Organized Crime and Triad

Activities to a steering committee. The steering committee, chaired by a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, strengthens the review of the relevant crime situation and intelligence collection; enhances co-ordination; and formulates more strategic enforcement actions. After the conviction of individual NEC person on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 of an offence in Hong Kong, the prosecution will also provide to the Court the crime statistics or case laws of the relevant group and invite the Court to consider enhancing the sentence as a result of the accused's status. The Police will conduct risk assessment based on the crime situation, including strengthening patrol, stop and search and carrying out anti-crime operations in high risk hours and regions.

To further enhance crime prevention and detection, and achieve a greater deterrent effect on violent and serious crimes on the streets, the Police have started to install closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) in public places with higher crime rate and pedestrian flow, among which 15 installations have been completed for technical tests in Mong Kok in early April. In the same month, the Police successfully used CCTV cameras to detect a robbery case involving NEC persons issued with Form No. 8 and a triad-related possession of imitation firearm case respectively, and arrested four suspects within 24 hours after the time of the incident. After optimisation of the operation, the Police will continue to install the remaining 600 sets of CCTV cameras in regions with higher crime rate from mid-2024.

(3) The Government attaches great importance to issues relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. The Security Bureau amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of the ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33 per cent to 900. The ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law. On the other hand, since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from December 7, 2022, the ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial reviews or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until March 2024, the ImmD has removed a total of 2 401 claimants from Hong Kong, including 249 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63 per cent compared to 2022.

The Government has all along been maintaining close communication with Consulates-General of the major source countries. The relevant Consulates-General agreed to step up efforts in providing correct information about the non-refoulement claim mechanism to their nationals. In addition, the Government has all along been maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders including the relevant Consulates-General and airlines in such aspects as requesting the Consulates-General for expediting the issuance of re-entry travel documents, arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations as and when necessary, so as to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. For instance, the ImmD has deployed

officers to conduct a total of 24 removal operations from November 2022 to March 2024 with in-flight escort of unsubstantiated claimants who were unco-operative and refused to be removed with a view to implementing forced repatriation and combating the delaying tactics of unsubstantiated claimants. During the same period, the ImmD also carried out 10 large-scale removal operations, removing a total of 252 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. At end-August 2023, the Secretary for Security also paid a visit to Vietnam to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by the ImmD of Hong Kong and the Immigration Department of Vietnam, which covers, among others, enhanced co-operation of both parties in respect of verification and repatriation of non-refoulement claimants.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

(a) on interception at source, apart from co-operating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;

(b) the ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;

(c) through streamlined process, the Torture Claims Appeal Board will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;

(d) on the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;

(e) strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and

(f) on removal operations, the Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants, with the target of removing not less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

The Government will continue to spare no efforts and adopt a multi-pronged strategy in handling issues relating to non-refoulement claims.

Auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on May 25 and 26

The Transport Department (TD) today (May 8) announced that two auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on May 25 (Saturday) and 26 (Sunday) in Meeting Room S421, L4, Old Wing, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 350 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public sale at each auction. The lists of marks have been uploaded to the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/index.html," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

(1) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

- (i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
- (ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
- (iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and

(iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)

Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(2) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(3) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(4) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(5) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Traditional Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/tvrm_auction/index.html.

EMSD announces latest sampling results for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 8) announced that the department tested 11 water samples collected from cooling towers in seven buildings in its routine inspections in April 2024. None of them were detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The EMSD also announced the locations of buildings which were served with nuisance notices during the preceding three-month period as the total legionella count was found in the fresh water cooling towers to be equal to or above the upper threshold. Details can be found in Annex 2.

The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/index.html).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.