

LCQ2: Emergency rescue work at scenes of public events

Following is a question by Prof the Hon Joseph Lee and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

It has been reported that on the evening of the 18th of last month, dozens of demonstrators in Yau Ma Tei fell down when they dodged to avoid being rounded up and arrested by the Police, with some of them stacking on top of one another and their lives hanging by a thread. Volunteer first-aiders at the scene tried to administer first aid treatment for them but were driven away by police officers with batons. The Police have all along denied that there was any stampede incident. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the Fire Services Department's handling of the injured persons in the aforesaid incident, including the numbers of ambulance personnel and ambulances deployed and the time of their arrival at the scene, their eyewitness reports made to the Fire Services Communication Centre (including whether there was any incident of people stacking on top of one another), and the number of injured persons, with a breakdown by the gender and age distribution of such persons, the seriousness of their injuries and the time of their arrival at the hospital; whether the law enforcement actions of the Police hindered and delayed the rescue work;

(2) whether police officers are required, when carrying out arrest actions in public events, to make the life safety and medical needs of the people at scenes the prime considerations; if they are required to do so, whether the police officers concerned in the aforesaid incident violated the relevant requirements; if they are not required to do so, of the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider afresh setting up an independent commission of inquiry to inquire about whether the force used by the police officers in the law enforcement actions taken in respect of the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments (including the aforesaid incident) was of an appropriate level?

Reply:

President,

Members of the public enjoy the freedoms of expression, speech and assembly, but they must abide by the law. According to section 10 of the Police Force Ordinance (Cap 232), it is the statutory duty of the Police to maintain public safety and public order. Therefore, if any unlawful act

occurs, the Police must take appropriate actions to restore public peace. If the public express their views in a peaceful and lawful manner, there is no need for the Police to use any force.

Since June 9 this year up till now, more than 1 000 protests, processions and public meetings have been staged in Hong Kong, and many of which eventually turned into serious illegal acts of violence. To respond to and curb violent acts, police officers have to deploy appropriate force to control the situations and bring rioters to justice so as to restore public safety and public order.

My reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) Regarding the illegal acts on the evening of November 18, there are a few points that need to be set out to help us understand the development of the incident:

Firstly, netizens had called on a large number of people online to block the roads in various districts on November 18, claiming that it was a tactic of distracting the Police – "besieging Wei to rescue Zhao" (i.e. relieving a besieged ally by attacking the home base of the besiegers), so that unlawful protesters inside the Hong Kong Polytechnic University would be able to escape.

Secondly, from that evening until the small hours of November 19, thousands of rioters wreaked havoc and blocked roads in Yau Ma Tei (YMT) and Jordan areas, including building barricades with sundries, attacking police officers with bricks and sundries, and hurling nearly a thousand petrol bombs in total, posing serious threats to the personal safety and lives of the public and the police officers at the scene.

Thirdly, before conducting dispersal and arrest operations, the Police had repeatedly warned rioters for a considerable period to stop their illegal acts and leave the scene but in vain. Police officers had therefore used tear gas to effect dispersal and arrest unlawful rioters.

During the operation, rioters tried to escape in order to evade legal liability, and some of them fell down at various locations when fleeing. Police officers at the scene took crowd management measures immediately and arranged assistance from ambulance and fire personnel who arrived at the scene. Before the ambulance personnel arrived, police officers also provided preliminary treatment for the injured persons. The Police arrested a total of 213 persons that night and the arrestees were charged with the offence of "taking part in a riot".

On the night of November 18, while handling an "automatic fire alarm" incident outside Exit A1 of YMT Station, at around 11.30 pm, fire personnel noticed that a large number of people were running to the direction of Pitt Street from Nathan Road, and there were people who fell in the passageway between Exit A1 of YMT Station and Bell House. There were also people who continued to flee by crossing those who fell. Fire personnel immediately

reported the situation to the Fire Services Communications Centre and requested for reinforcement. In the meantime, the fire personnel at the scene started rescue operation immediately and spent about 10 minutes to carry more than 30 trapped people to a safe place.

The first ambulance arrived at the junction of Waterloo Road and Nathan Road at 11.48pm. As the area around Dundas Street, Waterloo Road eastbound and Nathan Road northbound was blocked by a large number of bricks and obstacles, ambulances called to the scene could not park nearby. Therefore, ambulance personnel need to bring the ambulance stretchers and equipment to the site from further away. The ambulance personnel conveyed the first injured person to the nearest Kwong Wah Hospital for treatment on foot by using an ambulance stretcher at 12.02am. They also conveyed other injured persons in batches having regard to their level of injuries to different hospitals for treatment. At about 4.30am, the last batch of the injured persons with relatively minor injuries was conveyed to the hospitals. During the course of operation, ambulance personnel provided preliminary treatment for injured persons on the spot.

In the incident, the Fire Services Department (FSD) dispatched a total of 10 fire appliances, 41 ambulances, 48 fire personnel and 123 ambulance personnel. FSD conveyed altogether 33 people, including 26 males and seven females, to different hospitals for treatment, among those were four police officers. Apart from two adults whose ages were unknown, the rest of the injured persons were aged between 16 and 45. Their injuries included sprains, polypnea, dizziness, vomiting, bone fracture, etc. The youngest injured person was a 16-year-old who suffered head and back injuries. The eldest injured persons were two 45-year-olds who had dislocated fingers, shortness of breath and hand injuries. In the incident, fire personnel provided on-site triage of casualties with the assistance of the Police.

Under all circumstances, the Police will consider the needs of injured persons and will not obstruct any rescue work. They will try their best to facilitate ambulance and medical services. At the same time, the Police must take into account the circumstances, safety and security situations at scene. During rescue operations, FSD and the Police will co-ordinate closely to ensure that injured persons can receive medical treatment in the first instance when it is safe to do so.

According to the Police's guidelines, if an arrestee is injured at the scene of crime or during arrest, that person will be arranged to receive treatment. Most police officers have received first aid and basic medical training and are able to provide preliminary treatment for injured persons before ambulance personnel arrive at the scene. In handling injured arrestees, the Police must also consider the safety and security of arrestees.

(3) The Government considers it appropriate for the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) to handle complaints against police officers. IPCC was established under the Independent Police Complaints Council Ordinance (Cap 604) and operates independently to perform its statutory functions,

which include observing, monitoring and reviewing the handling and investigation of reportable complaints by the Complaints Against Police Office and making recommendations on the handling and investigation of complaints.

IPCC is proactively studying a number of major public order events held since June 9 and the corresponding actions taken by the Police. IPCC has also indicated that it would strive to publish the first preliminary report by around January next year where practicable. We opine that IPCC should be allowed to perform its statutory functions under the prevailing mechanism and proceed with the study proactively. Given the complexity of the work of the study, I hope that the public would give IPCC the time and room for completing this important work. The report to be submitted by IPCC to the Chief Executive will be made available to the public for examination in detail. The Government will carefully consider the recommendations of the report to decide on the appropriate follow-up actions.

Thank you, President.

[Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 to go on sale](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 will go on sale tomorrow (December 19).

The Almanac is bilingual and tabulated by month. It contains information including the traditional Chinese calendar, solar terms and moon phases, as well as the times of daily sunrise, sun transit, sunset, moonrise, moon transit, moonset and high and low tides, with the times of meridian passage and the rising and setting of the sun and planets graphically illustrated. The Almanac also includes a detailed Sun Path Diagram and star maps of the four quarters of the year. In addition, information on the duration of twilight, determination of apparent solar time, details of solar and lunar eclipses and observation of meteor showers and planetary phenomena as well as background information on calendars and the 24 solar terms are included.

At \$44 a copy, the Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 is available for sale at the Hong Kong Observatory Resource Centre and the Publications Sales Unit of the Information Services Department. The public can also purchase the Almanac through the online Government Bookstore at www.bookstore.gov.hk. A handy Hong Kong Observatory Calendar Card is included with this issue.

LCQ21: Provision of self-financing post-secondary education

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

In its review report submitted to the Education Bureau last year, the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education re-affirms the Government policy of supporting the parallel development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors, which is conducive to the diversified development of higher education in Hong Kong. However, some members of the self-financing post-secondary education sector have pointed out that currently the Government has merely launched the "Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors" (SSSDP) and the "Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong", which are insufficient to promote the development of self-financing institutions. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information about SSSDP:

- (i) the number of applications approved and the total amount of subsidy granted, as well as the average, highest and lowest amounts of subsidy granted in respect of the approved applications, in each of the past three academic years;
- (ii) whether it has reviewed the effectiveness of SSSDP; if so, of the criteria adopted for the review; if not, whether it will conduct such a review; and
- (iii) whether it knows the post-graduation employment situation of the students who received subsidies; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct a relevant survey;

(2) as a think tank has suggested that the percentage for non-standard entry to programmes of self-financing post-secondary institutions (i.e. admission of students whose results in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination do not meet the basic entrance requirements of undergraduate programmes), which is currently set at 5 per cent, be relaxed, whether the Government will consider the suggestion; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will allocate additional resources to self-financing post-secondary institutions to enable them to strengthen the cooperation with the relevant sectors, thereby ensuring that the programmes that they offer are responsive to market needs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as the Government will launch an Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme

for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to provide financial support for self-financing post-secondary institutions which are interested in offering programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, of the specific content of the Scheme (including the expenditure involved, the implementation timetable and the criteria for vetting and approval of the applications)?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been supporting the sustainable and healthy development of the self-financing post-secondary sector and has introduced various measures to support the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students. Apart from the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) implemented in the 2015/16 academic year, the Government has introduced a few new initiatives specifically benefitting the self-financing post-secondary sector, including the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong, which was implemented in the 2017/18 academic year, and the Seventh Round of the Matching Grant Scheme, which was applicable to the self-financing degree-awarding institutions only. At the same time, we have been channelling additional resources to the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students through various existing measures to assist in the development of new campuses and the promotion of teaching and learning, etc. The major measures supporting the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students are set out at the Annex.

The Government has accepted in full the review report published by the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education (the Task Force) in December 2018, and will continue to promote the parallel development of the publicly-funded sector and the quality self-financing post-secondary sector in higher education, so as to better meet the community's needs. The Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (CSPE) was revamped in November 2019 to enhance its role in facilitating the regulation, support, and co-ordination of the self-financing post-secondary education sector. The CSPE has commenced work on amending the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320). It will work with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to explore how to enhance the academic accreditation standards and practices, with a view to raising the standards of self-financing post-secondary education. Furthermore, the Government will introduce an Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to provide financial support for self-financing institutions which are interested in offering designated sub-degree or undergraduate programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, so as to help such programmes take off and to alleviate the financial burden of students in terms of tuition. The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education will be consulted on the details of the scheme.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) The SSSDP has been implemented as a pilot scheme since the 2015/16 academic year. It aims to increase the supply of subsidised undergraduate places by leveraging the supply of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, and to nurture talent in support of specific industries with keen demand for human resources. Given the positive response from various stakeholders to the SSSDP, the Government has regularised it since the 2018/19 academic year and increased the number of subsidised places from about 1 000 per cohort to about 3 000 per cohort. The designated programmes under the SSSDP fall into ten disciplines, including health care, architecture and engineering, testing and certification, creative industries, logistics, tourism and hospitality, computer science, financial technology, insurance, and sports and recreation. Moreover, starting from the 2019/20 academic year, the Government has further expanded the coverage of the SSSDP to subsidise about 2 000 students per cohort enrolling in the designated sub-degree programmes in the selected disciplines.

The numbers of programmes, the numbers of subsidised places, the numbers of actual intakes, the subsidy amounts, and the total amounts of subsidies, etc of the designated undergraduate programmes under the SSSDP in the past three years are as follows:

Admission Year	No. of Undergraduate Programmes	No. of subsidised places	No. of actual intakes	Total amount of subsidies (\$ million)
2016/17	15	1 030	991	122.5
2017/18	17	1 062	974	185.9
2018/19	37	2 776	1 817 (Note)	469.7

Note: Starting from the 2017/18 academic year, the Government has been providing non-means-tested subsidies for students pursuing self-financing undergraduate programmes other than those designated undergraduate programmes under the SSSDP. In addition, the number of subsidised places under the SSSDP was significantly increased in the 2018/19 academic year. Although the number of students attracted to pursue programmes under the SSSDP almost doubled, the enrolment rate was affected because of competition from other degree programmes.

In the 2018/19 academic year, students on designated laboratory-based undergraduate programmes were each provided with an annual subsidy of an amount up to \$71,700; and those on other designated undergraduate programmes were each provided with an annual subsidy of an amount up to \$41,000.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been reviewing the implementation of the SSSDP, including the supply of places and admissions, etc, in the light of Hong Kong's social and economic development needs as well as the views of stakeholders (including students, institutions, and industries). In consultation with the relevant bureaux/departments, we will adjust the

arrangements, including the selected disciplines of the SSSDP, the relevant subsidised programmes, and the number of subsidised places. The first cohort of students who received a subsidy to pursue the designated undergraduate programmes graduated in 2019. The participating institutions will submit the employment figures of these graduates in the second quarter of 2020. The statistics will help us understand the situation of graduates joining the relevant industries.

(2) At present, when the HKCAAVQ conducts programme accreditation exercises for the bachelor's degree programmes offered by the non-self-accrediting institutions, it normally allows the institutions to give special consideration to admitting applicants not complying with the minimum entrance requirements or other acceptable equivalent qualifications, subject to an admission ceiling of 5 per cent of the total student intake of the programmes. From the quality assurance perspective, imposing restrictions on the admission of students not complying with the minimum entrance requirements can ensure that there is minimal variation in the learning abilities among students, so as not to affect the quality of teaching and learning. This can also avoid, as far as possible, admitting students who fail to complete their studies because of their learning abilities, which will be a waste of their family's and society's resources, and their own precious time.

The EDB has set up the Sub-committee on Quality Assurance under the revamped CSPE to explore how to enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary sector, including the enhancement of the accreditation standards and practices for the self-financing sector. The EDB and the CSPE will continue to work closely with the HKCAAVQ, with a view to striking a balance between providing flexibility in the admission requirements of the self-financing institutions and ensuring the quality of programmes offered by the institutions.

(3) and (4) The EDB has been encouraging the self-financing post-secondary sector to operate programmes that meet community and industry needs. In fact, the self-financing post-secondary sector has sufficient flexibility in launching programmes to provide additional and complementary choices for post-secondary education in Hong Kong and enhance the diversity of our higher education sector as a whole.

The SSSDP not only encourages students to pursue self-financing programmes that nurture talent for designated industries with keen human resources needs, but also incentivises the self-financing institutions to respond to society's development needs swiftly by operating programmes that complement the manpower needs of the relevant industries. For instance, for allied health programmes at the degree level alone, the self-financing institutions have increased training places over the past few years to provide over 1 300 undergraduate places per year under the SSSDP to meet the needs of the sector. Apart from the allied health disciplines, some self-financing institutions have designed new and specialised programmes to groom talent to meet the needs of the community and emerging industries. Examples of such programmes are testing and certification, horticulture and landscape

management, and culinary arts and management. Furthermore, the EDB and the CSPE will conduct suitable strategic coordination for the self-financing post-secondary sector to facilitate the provision of quality programmes by the self-financing institutions, with a view to enriching higher education in Hong Kong and better responding to our manpower needs.

Having considered the recommendations by the Task Force, the Government proposes to earmark \$1.26 billion to set up the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to step up our support for the self-financing post-secondary institutions. This Scheme aims to increase the non-recurrent financial support for the self-financing institutions by offering one-off grants to support the self-financing institutions in offering post-secondary programmes that meet Hong Kong's human resources needs but require high start-up costs, so as to help such programmes take off to nurture the talent needed by the community urgently. We also propose that the additional grants be utilised for enhancement measures (such as facilitating programme and faculty development) or campus facilities improvements, so as to enhance teaching and learning, thereby encouraging the self-financing post-secondary institutions to explore and establish their specialised and niche areas, or undertake projects that are conducive to the sustainable development of the higher education sector as a whole. The EDB will consult the LegCo Panel on Education in early 2020 on the scheme and seek the LegCo's funding approval.

On the other hand, the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) set up in 2018 has been reviewing the promotion of VPET in Hong Kong. One of the tasks of this Task Force is to review how to foster closer collaboration between the industry and institutions to respond to Hong Kong's manpower needs. After considering the views collected during the public consultation period, the Task Force on Promotion of VPET is expected to complete the review and make specific recommendations to the Government in the first quarter of 2020.

[Transcript of remarks by S for S on jurisdiction of Eastern Artificial Island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex this morning (December 18):

Reporter: Mr Lee, why did the Government fail to tell the people that there

would be temporary checkpoints in the middle of the bridge and as a result the Hong Konger who was supposed to go to Macao was sent to Mainland China?

Secretary for Security: First of all, I think everybody should understand what a jurisdiction really encompasses. In a jurisdiction which belongs to a particular place that means the law enforcement agencies can enforce the law within its jurisdiction according to the need and according to the actual circumstances. For security operations, it would be up to the responsible jurisdiction to make the operational plan and also the other arrangements which include letting people know how they would operate. In that principle, it would be up to the Zhuhai law enforcement agencies to make that announcement.

I think it is important for people to understand once you leave the jurisdiction of Hong Kong, then you will be subject to the law of the other jurisdiction. That is a lesson, that is a message, that is an important legal concept that I think people of Hong Kong must know, so that they will understand at what point they may be subject to which jurisdiction and what laws.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

[LCQ18: New railway projects and Tung Chung traffic](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

The Chief Executive stated in this year's Policy Address that the Government would expedite the implementation of the projects proposed in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, including the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link, and would invite the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to commence the relevant detailed planning and design in the coming year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the time needed for MTRCL to carry out the detailed planning and design for the aforesaid projects, and when the authorities will give the public an account of the details of each of the new railway stations (including their locations as well as the arrangements for their entrances and exits);

(2) of the estimated time needed for completing the relevant public consultation processes; and

(3) given the continuous population growth in Tung Chung and the fact that it takes time to construct the Tung Chung Line Extension, whether the authorities will consider, prior to the commissioning of the Extension, enhancing the Green Minibus services in Tung Chung and introducing ferry services plying between Tung Chung and the Hong Kong and Kowloon regions, so as to meet Tung Chung residents' outbound transport needs?

Reply:

President,

My reply to Hon Holden Chow Ho-ding's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Transport and Housing Bureau had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit proposals for the implementation of the seven new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014. The MTRCL submitted proposals for the five railway projects of Tuen Mun South Extension, Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), East Kowloon Line, Tung Chung Line Extension and North Island Line to the Government successively.

Having examined the proposals submitted by the MTRCL and considered the urgency of and the land development potential that may be brought about by these projects, the Chief Executive indicated in the 2019 Policy Address that the Government would invite the MTRCL to commence the detailed planning and design for the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link in the coming year, so that work on these three railway projects can commence as early as possible.

The detailed planning and design stage would involve a number of activities, including consultation with the public and stakeholders and resolution of the comments received, carrying out feasibility study, site investigation, project design, gazettal of railway schemes and handling of objections, carrying out environmental impact assessment, seeking authorisation of the railway schemes, as well as preparation of relevant agreements with the MTRCL. In particular, the Government and MTRCL would need to handle technical issues associated with the new railway projects, such as the impact on nearby residents, the environment and ecology arising from the railway alignment and its mitigation measures, the interface with existing railway network, utilisation of resources, etc. When the details of a proposed scheme such as railway alignment as well as location of station(s) and entrance(s) are available, the Government will consult the public in line with established procedures. In respect of projects for which the MTRCL had submitted the proposals, the time required for the detailed planning and design stage is preliminarily estimated as three to five years, including the time allowed for public consultation, subject to the degree of complexities of the projects and the progress of implementing the above activities.

(3) At present, Tung Chung is served by a convenient, efficient and diversified public transport network. Apart from using the railway for

travelling to and from various districts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, Tung Chung residents may also take franchised buses, ferries, green minibuses and taxis where appropriate to different destinations. In response to the population growth in Tung Chung, the Transport Department (TD) will continue to closely monitor the operation and service quality of the public transport services in Tung Chung, as well as the change in passengers' demand for the public transport services. The department will introduce new services or request relevant existing operators to enhance or optimise their services (e.g. increasing the frequency) in a timely manner in order to further improve the public transport network of Tung Chung and the overall efficiency to meet passengers' demand. Among others, the TD regularly reviews the utilisation of franchised bus service in different districts and works with the franchised bus companies for improving franchised bus service in districts by examining proposals submitted by the companies under the annual Route Planning Programme. These include proposals on introduction of new routes as well as adjustment of the existing service frequency, service hours and routes, in order to ensure the provision of adequate and proper franchised bus services to meet passengers' demand.