

LCQ17: Traffic and crowd control measures for mega events

Following is a question by the Hon Rock Chen and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

Hong Kong is vigorously promoting a mega event economy and developing mega event tourism, with over 100 mega events to be held in the second half of this year. On the other hand, a drone show featuring Japanese cartoon characters held in Tsim Sha Tsui last month (the Drone Show) attracted viewing by many members of the public and tourists, resulting in large crowds and temporary road closures in various parts of Tsim Sha Tsui. Regarding the traffic and crowd control measures for mega events, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as some members of the public have relayed that on the day of the Drone Show, as a result of temporary road closures in the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront area, many motorists and members of the public had to make detours, and in particular, severe traffic congestions in Canton Road and Kowloon Park Drive had seriously jammed outgoing traffic from the Western Harbour Crossing heading towards Canton Road after turning right from Austin Road, whether the authorities had communicated with the organizer in advance to estimate the pedestrian and traffic flow for formulating appropriate traffic control measures; of the authorities' improvement plan in future;

(2) as it is learnt that the Drone Show was organized by a commercial organization, with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau being just a supporting organization, and the organizer only announced the relevant details shortly before the event, affecting the relevant arrangements of the Government and other organizations, how the authorities will cooperate with the local travel industry in future, such as whether advanced publicity and promotion will be conducted for mega events organized by commercial organizations, and proper coordination be made with the relevant government departments (e.g. the Hong Kong Police Force and the Hong Kong Fire Services Department) beforehand; and

(3) whether there is a standard procedure for assessing the attractiveness of mega events, as well as the anticipated number of visitors and traffic flow; whether the authorities will, on the premise of mega events being assessed to be popular, model on the special traffic and transport arrangements for the Lunar New Year Fireworks Display (including adjusting the service frequencies and routes of public transport), notify members of the public, motorists and visitors of the relevant road closures, as well as implement and announce crowd control measures in advance?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is Asia's Events Capital. Mega events bear strategic significance for Hong Kong. Not only do the events generate more business opportunities for various industries including hotel, catering, retail, transportation etc and boost the local economy, but also attract tourists to personally experience Hong Kong's actual situation and vibrancy, and make the best ambassadors to tell the good stories of Hong Kong.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Security Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Rock Chen is as follows:

The organising of mega events often requires vetting, approval and support by different government departments to ensure the compliance with requirements in hard and soft infrastructure, for instance, matters on venues and licences. The relevant bureaux, departments and statutory bodies will closely communicate and cooperate to render sufficient interdepartmental assistance and nurture the culture of supporting and facilitating successful organisation of mega events in Hong Kong.

On the traffic and crowd management of mega events, in general, relevant government departments, including the Police and the Transport Department (TD), will estimate the potential impact and demand caused on the traffic flow and crowd situation in the vicinity, with regard to the information provided by the event organiser and/or the relevant policy bureau or department responsible for the large scale event as well as the nature and scale of the event, to formulate appropriate temporary measures, such as road closures and traffic diversions, accordingly. With reference to such temporary traffic arrangements, the TD will also coordinate various public transport (PT) operators to suitably adjust PT services (including service suspension, adjustment or curtailment of the routes, etc). In addition, service enhancements or provision of special PT services will be arranged when necessary, basing on the anticipated passenger flow and travelling demand, to facilitate crowd dispersal. Depending on the need, the TD will disseminate information about the temporary road closures, traffic diversions, and special PT service arrangements through various channels, prior to the event to facilitate advance planning of journeys by the public. During mega events, the TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) will also closely monitor the traffic conditions and coordinate in a timely manner when needed. ETCC will disseminate the latest information regarding the special traffic and transportation arrangements to the public as well. Take the Lunar New Year Fireworks Display held in February 2024 as an example. The Government made traffic and transport arrangements, which included implementation and announcement of crowd control measures in advance, and informed the members of public, drivers and tourists about the road closures, while adjusting headway and routing of PT services, in order to help manage the crowd and traffic around the Victoria Harbour. The arrangements facilitated a crowd of over 338 000 to enjoy the spectacular fireworks show on both sides of the Victoria Harbour. As for other mega

events, relevant government departments will still devise suitable traffic and crowd control measures according to anticipated situation and risk assessment, and disseminate the information to the public through appropriate means and channels.

For the traffic situation in the vicinity of the drone show in Tsim Sha Tsui East on May 25 as mentioned in the question, according to record, there was a traffic accident in the junction of Salisbury Road and Nathan Road in the evening on day of event, resulted in 8 persons injured. The Police implemented temporary road closures because of the accident, affecting the traffic in the area of Tsim Sha Tsui East.

On the announcement and publicity of mega events, the Government has compiled and published the 2024 first half and second half calendars of mega events. The Government will continuously update the calendars of mega events and maintain close liaison with tourism, catering, retail, hotel and other sectors, with a view to informing the industries of the upcoming mega events early and allowing their early preparations for a portfolio of attractive tourism products, dining packages etc. For example, we have created special routes, arranging group tours to visit the "A Path to Glory – Jin Yong's Centennial Memorial, Sculpted by Ren Zhe" exhibition in Central and the adjacent tourism spots, through travel agents. Besides, leveraging pyrotechnics and drone shows, the travel trade has introduced signature products such as harbour cruises and pyrotechnics-themed dinners, bringing business opportunities for the catering, retail and other related sectors, stimulating consumption and generating economic benefits. The event mentioned in the question was organised by private organisation. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has maintained close liaison with the event organiser over the past months and coordinated relevant government departments to provide assistance required, with a view to facilitating a smooth organisation of the event in Hong Kong with needed conditions. While the Government will continue to encourage early announcement of mega event information, appropriate coordination and accommodation will be provided to suit the organiser's preference and plan on publicity and commercial collaboration.