

LCQ19: Making optimal use of performance venues for hosting mega events

Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

To alleviate the difficulties and challenges faced by the performing arts sector in hosting activities such as large-scale performances and concerts, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department reduced the hire charges of four of the performance venues under its management (i.e. the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKC), Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Hong Kong City Hall) from 20 per cent of the gross ticket proceeds to 10 per cent in December 2022, but such arrangement will expire in April next year. Separately, some members of the sector have relayed that as regards the HKC, a key venue for large-scale sports events, concerts for both international and local music sectors as well as arts and cultural programmes, the application threshold for hiring the venue has remained too high. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of large-scale performances and concerts as well as total numbers of shows held at various venues (including the aforesaid four performance venues) in each of the years since 2022;
- (2) of the respective numbers and ratios of occupied and idle days for each of the aforesaid four performance venues in each of the years since 2022; whether the authorities have reviewed the reasons for the venues being left idle and looked into the options to increase the utilisation rates; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) of the total number of applications received by the Government for hiring the HKC in each of the years since 2022 and, among them, the respective numbers of applications approved and rejected; the reasons for rejecting the applications;
- (4) given that the arrangement of reducing the hire charges of the aforesaid four performance venues will soon come to an end, whether the authorities have plans to extend the relevant arrangement or even reduce the hire charges to 5 per cent of the gross ticket proceeds as well as relax other application criteria for hiring the venues to enable more organisers to stage performances, so as to further enhance the utilisation rates of venues such as the HKC; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (5) to further promote the hosting of international mega events in Hong Kong

and attract world-renowned performers to come to Hong Kong to stage concerts, coupled with the fact that the Kai Tak Sports Park will soon come into operation, of the authorities' plans to co-operate and co-ordinate with the management units of various major venues and outdoor venues to properly perform the role of attracting the hosting of mega events and performing arts activities in Hong Kong, so as to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and make an all-out effort in developing Hong Kong into an events capital?

Reply:

President,

Arts and cultural programmes and pop concerts have been well-received in Hong Kong. The usage rates of suitable venues are thus high. Relevant government departments have been providing appropriate facilitation measures to assist the staging of large-scale events, including concerts, in Hong Kong. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Adrian Ho is as follows:

(1) The number of large-scale arts performances, film screenings and pop concerts/performance held at the Grand Theatre and Concert Hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) and the Concert Hall of the Hong Kong City Hall (HKCH) from 2022 to November 30, 2024 are listed below (with the number of sessions indicated in parentheses):

Year/Venue	HKCC Grand Theatre	HKCC Concert Hall	HKCH Concert Hall
2022*	39 (98)	80 (122)	91 (140)
2023	73 (185)	144 (195)	162 (241)
2024	61 (163)	107 (183)	139 (179)

The numbers of large-scale arts performances, sports events and pop concerts held at the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKC) and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium (QES) from 2022 to November 30, 2024 are listed below (with the number of sessions indicated in parentheses):

Year/Venue	HKC	QES
2022*	19 (82)	29 (51)
2023	24 (106)	53 (141)
2024	23 (109)	57 (145)

*The four venues were closed from January 7 to April 20, 2022 due to the

COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) The usage rate of the aforementioned four venues from 2022 to November 30, 2024 are listed below (with the number of days not hired indicated in parentheses):

Year/ Usage rate	HKCC		HKCH	HKC	QES
	Grand Theatre	Concert Hall	Concert Hall		
2022*	100% (0)	100% (0)	98.64%# (3)	100% (0)	95.3% (8)
2023	100% (0)	100% (0)	100% (0)	100% (0)	98.6% (4)
2024	100% (0)	100% (0)	100% (0)	100% (0)	97.4% (7)

*The four venues were closed from January 7 to April 20, 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The usage rates are calculated based on the number of days available for hire.

#Three bookings for the HKCH were cancelled in 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(3) The booking applications for the HKC received from 2022 to November 30, 2024 are summarised as follows:

Year	Total no. of booking applications received	No. of successful applications	No. of unsuccessful applications
2022	130	42	88
2023	225	35	190
2024	220	37	183

Under the existing policy, the HKC is an important sports venue. Priority will thus be given to booking applications for large sports events at the HKC. In the meantime, the HKC has always been popular among organisers of large-scale events and concerts. For example, in 2024, 22 per cent of the successful applications were for large-scale sports events; whereas the remainder were for performing arts activities, of which 59 per cent are concerts. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), when processing the applications, will consider the nature, significance and attraction of the events, audience appeal of the performers and booking history of the applicants, etc. when more than one organisation applying for the same time slot, due to the strong demand for the usage of the HKC.

(4) Lowering the hire charge based on percentage of gross ticket proceeds to 10 per cent is a special measure that the LCSD implemented at the four

aforementioned venues during the pandemic, with an aim to help the industry tide over the difficult times. The special measure is set to last until the end of 28 months after resumption of the operation at original seating capacity (i.e. April 21, 2025) at the venues. In view that society has returned to normalcy steadily, the government needs to gradually lift special measures that have been implemented in response to the pandemic, including the termination of various fee reduction arrangements implemented by the LCSD at performance venues on December 31, 2023 as the pandemic was over. In fact, as pointed out in the reply for part (2) above, competition for use of the HKC has been intense, and the usage rate has reached 100 per cent in the past three years.

(5) To facilitate members of the public and visitors to check information on concerts held at different venues in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) has set up a dedicated page with detailed information on all concerts in Hong Kong.

The HKTb has set up the Mega Events Development and Advancement Division (MEDA) since March 1 this year to serve as the first point of contact for mega events. The MEDA also works closely with stakeholders, such as organisers of large-scale performances and concerts, to render various kinds of support, including helping organisers to search for venues, arranging site recces, advising on event planning and assisting in publicity, etc.

Opening in the first quarter of 2025, the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) is the largest sports infrastructure project ever commissioned in Hong Kong. The KTSP, upon completion, will provide a new and attractive venue for sports and cultural mega events, including a 50 000-seat Kai Tak Stadium, a 10 000-seat Kai Tak Arena, a 5 000-seat Kai Tak Youth Sports Ground and about 14-hectare landscaped open space and other ancillary facilities. The Kai Tak Sports Park Limited (KTSPL) has, all along, proactively reached out to local stakeholders from sectors including sports, arts and culture, entertainment as well as performance, and has showcased the advantages of the KTSP's multi-purposes facilities to over 200 local and international organisations through various channels. We believe that the facilities of the KTSP will be welcomed by organisers of large-scale events. We will continue to maintain close liaison with the KTSPL with a view to jointly promoting the KTSP as the destination for local and international large-scale sports, performing and entertainment events. The four aforementioned venues under the LCSD's management and the KTSP each have their own unique features and offer different seating capacities and facilities for event organisers to choose from. We believe that they will play an important role in solidifying Hong Kong's status as an events capital.

The HKTb will continue to play its role as the first point of contact and work closely with government departments and event organisers with a view to attracting more new events and mega activities to Hong Kong. Leveraging on the opening of the KTSP, the HKTb will make every effort to promote Hong Kong as an events capital and maximise benefits.