

LCQ9: Opening hours of performance and sports venues

Following is a question by the Hon Yim Kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (January 22):

Question:

The National 14th Five-Year Plan expressly supports Hong Kong's development into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, and the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 promulgated by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau on December 30 last year further outlines clearly a vision and development mission for Hong Kong's tourism industry. However, some groups have relayed that quite a number of tourist-captivating events cannot take place in Hong Kong due to the fact that certain public spaces are only open until 11pm, and notably a large-scale magic fest originally planned to be staged in Hong Kong was called off for this reason. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it has been learnt that a number of concerts and performances held at government venues were fined for failing to finish at the scheduled time in the past three years, whether statistics have been compiled and analyses have been made in this regard by the authorities, in particular the analyses on the reasons for the overruns, etc.; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether the authorities have, in the light of the need to develop the mega event economy, reviewed afresh the restrictions on the opening hours of venues for organising sports and performing arts events, in particular the possibility of extending the opening hours or implementing 24-hour opening for public spaces in non-core residential areas; if so, of the details and progress made; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) given that the Kai Tak Sports Park will open in the first quarter of this year, whether the authorities will make flexible arrangements for the opening hours of the Park on the request of event organisers?

Reply:

President,

There are various outdoor and indoor venues for hosting different types and scales of cultural, sports and entertainment events in Hong Kong. To allow more events that are well-received by the public and tourists to be smoothly organised, various government bureaux and departments maintain close communication on the arrangements of events, with a view to facilitating

organisers to carry out the activities smoothly, at the same time balancing the impact on the daily lives of residents in the neighbourhood.

In consultation with the Development Bureau (DEVB), the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau and the Security Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Yim Kong is as follows:

(2) and (3) Approval and support by various government departments are often required for organising events. When assessing individual events, relevant departments would consider and facilitate, taking into account the surrounding environment as well as actual situation and needs of the event, in a holistic and proactive manner. If an organiser is required to apply for a Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licence from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for holding an event in a public premises, the FEHD would consult the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the Police. The EPD would provide professional advice on noise management in accordance with the requirements as stated in the Noise Control Ordinance. For a public entertainment activity at outdoor area involving no music, singing, or instrumental performing, no noise control requirements or restrictions on the time of activity will be imposed, as long as no noise disturbance is caused to nearby residents. The activity may last until 11pm and beyond. If there are any music, singing and instrument performing activities which may emit low level of noise, the organiser should consider adopting suitable noise mitigation measures, such as adjusting the number, position, direction and volume of speakers to minimise noise emission from the activities, in order to ensure compliance with the requirement of noise not being audible within the neighbourhood nearby after 11pm. The EPD welcomes inquiries from organisers and stands ready to provide professional advice and assistance. Should there be a need to extend the event beyond 11pm, the Police would actively facilitate, taking into account the actual situation, provided that the public order and safety would not be affected.

Opening in March this year, the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) is the largest sports infrastructure ever commissioned in Hong Kong. It will boost sports development and inject impetus into related industries such as recreation, entertainment and tourism, and also mega-event economy. Venues of various scale within the KTSP will provide modern and multi-purpose sports and recreation facilities. A number of local and international events promotion agencies have decided or planned to rent the different facilities at the KTSP for sports and entertainment activities. Guided by the aforementioned principles, relevant departments would also consider and facilitate, taking into account the surrounding environment as well as actual situation and needs of the event, in a holistic and proactive manner when vetting event proposals. The operating hours of the venues in the KTSP will also be flexibly adjusted for accommodating the actual situations and needs of individual events.

(1) For the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKC) and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium (QES) under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the contracts signed between the LCSD and organisers of pop concerts specify the starting and ending times of events. According to the contracts, concerts

must conclude no later than 11.30pm. If an event continues beyond the scheduled ending time, the organiser has to pay additional rent based on the mechanism as specified in the contract. Over the past three years (2022 to 2024), the numbers of performance sessions at the two venues exceeding the scheduled ending time and causing the organisers to pay additional rent are listed below:

Venue	Number of sessions	Major cause
HKC	27	Performances of singers overrunning
QES	0	N/A

As for the Central Harbourfront Event Space and the Wan Chai Harbourfront Event Space (collectively referred to as "the Spaces"), the DEVB has let the site to private organisations for operation by way of short term tenancy. There is not any clause in the rental contracts between the organisations operating the Spaces and the event organisers renting the Spaces on additional rent to be paid for events exceeding the time scheduled for their conclusion.