

Appeal for information on missing woman in Sham Shui Po (with photo)

Police today (January 24) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Sham Shui Po.

Wong Hoi-ying, Fiona, aged 19, went missing after she left her residence in Pak Tin Estate on January 22 morning. Her family made a report to Police yesterday (January 23)

She is about 1.47 metres tall, 39 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and long black hair. She was last seen wearing a black jacket, black trousers and white sports shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8036 or 9020 6542 or email to rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Germany and Korea

suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 24) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 and H5N6 avian influenza in the District of Northeim of the State of Niedersachsen in Germany and Gwangju Metropolitan City in Korea respectively, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 180 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Germany, and about 50 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 23.85 million poultry eggs from Korea in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the German and Korean authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Public should beware of scam video about investment plan purported to be recommended by CE

A Government spokesman today (January 24) advised members of the public to stay vigilant about forged TV programme clips created by artificial intelligence circulating online about an investment plan purported to be recommended by the Chief Executive. The Government clarified that the so-called remarks by the Chief Executive are fictitious, and vehemently condemned those who have attempted deception in the name of the Chief Executive.

The spokesman reminded the public to be cautious regarding similar investment-related advertisements or promotional videos. They should not provide their personal information online, sign up for mobile applications or open any links. Members of the public should remain vigilant and verify the authenticity of such content.

The incident will be referred to the Police for a follow-up investigation.

LCQ7: Co-operation with the Mainland's pilot free trade zones

Following is a question by the Hon Yim Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

It has been reported that 22 pilot free trade zones (FTZs) have been established on the Mainland. There are views that by strengthening the co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland's FTZs, Hong Kong, in its role as a "super-connector" connecting the Mainland and the rest of the world, can proactively integrate into the overall development of the country, thereby creating wider room for the development of Hong Kong's trade and financing sectors, as well as high-end professional services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has studied ways to strengthen co-operation between Hong Kong and the FTZs in different regions of the Mainland;

(2) whether the Government has actively reached out to the Mainland's FTZs for co-operation in policies, information as well as trade and investment; if so, of the details of the existing partnering mechanism, and the Mainland's FTZs with such partnering mechanism already established by the Government; and

(3) as the State Ministry of Commerce promulgated the List of Key Tasks in Pilot Free Trade Zones (2023-2025) in June 2023, which mentions that one of the key tasks of the Guangdong FTZ is to advance the compatibility and alignment of rules and mechanisms between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong and Macao, and deepen co-operation with Hong Kong and Macao in such fields as trade, investment, finance, legal services and mutual recognition of professional qualifications, of the Government's major work plan for this year and the next year in relation to co-operation with the Guangdong FTZ in the relevant fields?

Reply:

President,

The establishment of pilot Free Trade Zones (FTZs) is a strategic initiative of the nation to drive its reform and liberalisation forward, mainly to explore new ways to deepen reform and widen liberalisation comprehensively through pilot implementation of institutional innovation in finance, economy and trade, investment, customs clearance, etc, with a view

to accumulating more experience for possible replication and promotion. Since 2013, the nation has set up a total of 22 pilot FTZs in Shanghai, Guangdong, Tianjin, Fujian, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Henan, Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Hainan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Hebei, Yunnan, Heilongjiang, Beijing, Hunan, Anhui and Xinjiang.

Having consulted the Department of Justice (DoJ), the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB), and the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB), our consolidated reply to the three parts of the question is set out below:

The nation has rolled out a number of policy measures for the pilot FTZs to enhance the level of trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation, including the implementation of the "Special Administrative Measures (Negative List) for the Access of Foreign Investment in Pilot FTZs", under which areas outside the Negative List are administered in accordance with the principle of equal treatment for domestic and foreign investments, and foreign-invested enterprises are accorded national treatment, as well as the establishment of the Mainland's first international trade "Single Window". These liberalisation and facilitation measures provide Hong Kong-invested enterprises and other foreign invested enterprises with greater room for development.

Different pilot FTZs may have different emphasis in positioning, missions and measures. For instance, the Guangdong pilot FTZ, which covers three regions, including Qianhai and Shekou Area of Shenzhen, Nansha New Area of Guangzhou and Hengqin New Area of Zhuhai, focuses on deepening the co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The Guangdong government issued "the '14th Five-year Plan' for the Development of China (Guangdong) Pilot FTZ" in September 2021, and announced that it would further open up to Hong Kong and Macao in respect of "promoting in-depth Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao co-operation".

The Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement promotes trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation between the two places, and also covers liberalisation measures for pilot implementation in the Guangdong pilot FTZ, including allowing professionals who have obtained the qualification of General Practice Surveyors in Hong Kong to directly register for practice in Qianhai, Hengqin and Nansha, enabling them to provide real estate appraisal services without the need to obtain professional qualification through mutual recognition with the Mainland. These liberalisation measures, on one hand, meet the keen demand for Hong Kong's professional services arising from the development of the pilot FTZs on the Mainland and, on the other hand, assist Hong Kong service suppliers to actively tap the enormous potential of the pilot FTZs and create more business opportunities.

As regards Qianhai, the Central Government promulgated the Overall Development Plan for the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Co-operation Zone (Qianhai Overall Development Plan) in late 2023. The development of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Co-

operation Zone is an important initiative for supporting Hong Kong's social and economic development, consolidating and enhancing its competitive advantages, fostering a higher level of co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and establishing a new development paradigm in pursuing opening up. The various policy initiatives outlined in the Qianhai Overall Development Plan are not just of benefit to Hong Kong but will also contribute to the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and our country. In particular, measures in the areas of financial services, legal services, information technology services and professional services will create more favourable conditions for these industries in which Hong Kong's strengths lie to expand their businesses into the Mainland market. The governments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Shenzhen will make use of task forces as platforms to discuss how to more effectively promote and implement the Qianhai Overall Development Plan to support and facilitate different sectors in Hong Kong in utilising the new opportunities brought about by Qianhai.

As regards financial co-operation, the FSTB and the Guangdong Financial Supervisory Authority signed the "Agreement on Enhancing Hong Kong-Guangdong Financial Co-operation" in March 2023 to deepen financial co-operation between the two places. The FSTB is striving for the establishment of insurance after-sales service centres by the Hong Kong insurance industry in places such as Nansha and Qianhai, with a view to providing GBA residents who are holders of Hong Kong policies with support such as enquiries, claims and renewal of policies. Furthermore, the FSTB will continue to make good use of the financial reform and innovation measures in the Qianhai Co-operation Zone to expand the businesses of Hong Kong financial institutions in Qianhai. Relevant measures include promoting Hong Kong's limited partnership funds to be qualified under the Qianhai Qualified Foreign Limited Partnerships to participate in private equity investment on the Mainland; and co-establishing the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Financial Co-operation Committee with the Shenzhen authorities in the first half of 2024. The committee will advise and offer suggestions in respect of bolstering mutual access to the financial markets, co-operation on financial technologies and green finance, and exchange of financial talents.

In addition, the DoJ has been actively promoting legal services co-operation in the GBA, including the promotion of the interface of mechanisms and rules, so as to fully leverage Hong Kong's unique advantages, strengthening the rule of law construction in the GBA. In terms of the interface of mechanisms, the DoJ will establish a standing interfacing platform with the Supreme People's Court within 2024 as a high-level, regular and institutionalised official channel to take forward the research and practical work on judicial and legal matters relating to the GBA, and to implement more initiatives that benefit civil and commercial interactions between the two places so as to provide support for the high-quality development of other GBA cities. The DoJ will continue to take forward the work of the DoJ's GBA Task Force, including (1) to establish a GBA legal information platform to integrate information on legal and dispute resolution services in the GBA, so as to enhance the exchange and transparency of information within the region; (2) to continue to support and promote the

sharing of information and resources among arbitration and mediation institutions in the GBA and construct a collaborative online dispute resolution platform; and (3) to continue the promotion of "soft connectivity" among the mediation mechanisms of the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, including organising training courses in Hong Kong for GBA mediators so as to promote the development of diversified dispute resolution mechanisms in the GBA.

In terms of the interface of rules and regulations, the DoJ is actively pursuing the extension of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law" and "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" to the whole GBA in 2024. This would provide more choices for Hong Kong-invested enterprises and more enterprises in the GBA may choose Hong Kong law as the applicable law for civil and commercial contracts and choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration, thereby building a market-based and internationalised business environment in the GBA. Moreover, the DoJ will also strive for state-owned enterprises' prioritisation of choosing Hong Kong law as the applicable law to their contracts, or choosing Hong Kong's dispute resolution services to handle their contractual disputes and as such, sound legal services and safeguards would be provided to Mainland and foreign investors, facilitating their use of Hong Kong as the gateway to the Mainland as well as facilitating the investors to use Hong Kong as the port to expand to overseas.

The HKSAR Government all along has close collaborations on innovation and technology with various Mainland provinces and municipalities. For example, we jointly launched a thematic website with the first batch of about 110 Cross-boundary Public Services with the People's Government of Guangdong Province in November 2023 for use by residents and enterprises of the two places. Following the successful implementation of the interconnection of "iAM Smart" with the Unified Identity Authentication Platform of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong residents can log on directly to the Guangdong Provincial Administrative Service website and the "Yue Sheng Shi" mobile app through "iAM Smart" to enjoy a wide range of Guangdong's public services in a more convenient and efficient manner. We have also set up "iAM Smart" registration counters in Guangzhou, Qianhai and Futian to help Hong Kong citizens residing there to register or upgrade to "iAM Smart+".

To foster the effective development of digital economy in the GBA, the ITIB and the Cyberspace Administration of China jointly announced in December 2023 the facilitation measure entitled "Standard Contract for the Cross-boundary Flow of Personal Information Within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Mainland, Hong Kong)" (GBA Standard Contract) and its "early and pilot implementation" arrangement under the framework of the "Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitating Cross-boundary Data Flow within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" signed in June last year. Implementation of the GBA Standard Contract facilitation measure will streamline the arrangements for cross-boundary flow of personal information from nine Mainland cities in the GBA and Hong Kong. The GBA Standard Contract facilitation measure is also applicable to the Guangdong pilot FTZs in Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Zhuhai.

The HKSAR Government will continue to discuss with the Mainland authorities to seek the Mainland's (including various pilot FTZs') further liberalisation to Hong Kong, with a view to assisting Hong Kong enterprises and professionals to develop on the Mainland through the preferential arrangements, and strengthening economic and trade co-operation.

LCQ9: Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

The Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports (the Programme), launched in 2018, aims to provide additional funding to the national sports associations (NSAs) of eight team sports (namely baseball, basketball, handball, hockey, ice hockey, softball, volleyball and water polo) and provide allowances to members of the Hong Kong teams in the relevant sports, so as to help enhance the performance of these team sports progressively and increase their chances of attaining elite sports status in the future. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government advised at the meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports of this Council on November 13 last year that the effectiveness of the Programme was under review and an announcement would be made in due course, of the relevant assessment results or preliminary assessment results;

(2) of the respective results of the aforesaid eight team sports in various competitions during the operation of the Programme (set out in a table);

(3) as the Government, in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2022-2023, indicated that it had set aside \$130 million for continuing the implementation of the Programme, of a breakdown of the expenditure from the funding to date and the remaining balance and, for each team sport, of the respective (i) amounts of funding received by the NSAs concerned, and (ii) numbers of athletes receiving the funding; and

(4) as the Director of Audit's Report No. 74 published by the Audit Commission in 2020 recommended that the authorities closely monitor the implementation of the Programme, including deliberating with the Coordinating

Committee for the Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports (the Coordinating Committee) on how best to accomplish the aims and ultimate goal of the Programme, of the approach adopted by the authorities following their deliberation with the Coordinating Committee and the relevant outcomes?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the Development Programme for Team Sports 2018-2023 (previously known as the Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports) (previous round of programme) in January 2018, which provided additional funding support to the national sports associations (NSAs) of eight team sports with team size of five and above featuring in the Asian Games (AG) (namely baseball, basketball, handball, hockey, ice hockey, softball, volleyball and water polo). The additional funding support aimed to enable the relevant NSAs to formulate and implement training programmes for Hong Kong teams (men and women's teams), and provide allowances to team members with a view to progressively enhancing their performance in the AG, and increase their chances of attaining elite sports status in the future.

As the 2022 Hangzhou AG (2022 AG) was postponed to September through October 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government extended the previous round of programme by one year to December 31, 2023 with the endorsement of the Sports Commission. Refinements were introduced to the programme starting from 2023, including replacing ice hockey with women's football to continue our support to the relevant NSAs in preparation for the AG.

My reply to the Hon Vincent Cheng's question is as follows:

(1) The previous round of programme ended on December 31, 2023. After the Hangzhou AG, the Commissioner for Sports visited the eight team sports supported under the previous round of programme in November 2023, and exchanged views with the representatives of the relevant NSAs, coaches and athletes on the development of each team sports and the needs of athletes. All of the NSAs expressed that the additional resources provided to them under the programme were conducive to the development of team sports. These resources helped them step up training and upgrade their gear and equipment. The athlete allowances were also a validation and recognition of their dedication to sports, which has encouraged them to enhance their performances. Six out of 11 teams supported by the programme have improved their performances.

After reviewing the effectiveness of the previous round of programme, the Government launched the Development Programme for Team Sports 2024-2027 (new round of programme) with the endorsement of the Sports Commission, which aims to continue provide additional funding support to the relevant NSAs of eight team sports (namely baseball, basketball, handball, hockey, softball, volleyball, men's water polo and women's football). On top of national squads, the programme is extended to members of the second-tier squads. The

goal is to improve the teams' performances in the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, and increase their chances of attaining elite status. The funding period for the new round of programme is from January 2024 to March 2027, which is expected to benefit about 430 athletes each year with an annual budget of around \$30 million.

The new round of programme has introduced targeted support including the provision of additional resources to develop second-tier squads, dedicated funding for the engagement of high-performance coaches and the strengthening of sports medicine support. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau will review the effectiveness of the development programme after the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, including but not limited to the performances of each team sports at the AG, as well as the development progress of second-tier squads. Depending on results of the review, the Government will consider how to continue supporting team sports that meet the standards, and to focus resources on aligning with the long-term development direction of team sports.

The Government conducted a briefing on January 17, 2024 to provide relevant NSAs with the details of the new round of programme. We will monitor the implementation of the programme

(2) In the previous round of programme, the results of the relevant subsidised team sports at the 2018 Jakarta AG (2018 AG) and the 2022 AG are as follows:

Sport	Team	Result (Note 1)	
		2018 AG	2022 AG
Baseball	Men	6th / 8 teams	6th / 8 teams
Basketball	Men	13th / 13 teams	12th / 16 teams
	Women	10th / 10 teams	9th / 12 teams
Handball	Men	8th / 13 teams	9th / 13 teams
	Women	7th / 10 teams	5th / 9 teams
Hockey	Men	12th / 12 teams	Not applicable (Note 2)
	Women	9th / 10 teams	9th / 10 teams

Ice Hockey	Men	2017 Sapporo Asian Winter Games (AWG): Group 1 5th / 6 teams	Not applicable (Note 3)
	Women	2017 Sapporo AWG: 6th / 6 teams	
Softball	Women	7th / 7 teams	7th / 8 teams
Volleyball	Men	19th / 20 teams	13-19th / 19 teams
	Women	11th / 11 teams	10th / 13 teams
Water Polo	Men	9th / 9 teams	7th / 8 teams
	Women	6th / 6 teams	Not applicable (Note 4)
Football	Women	Not applicable (Note 3)	9th / 16 teams

Note 1: Results were based on the announcement made by the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China

Note 2 : Men's hockey team were not qualified

Note 3: Women's football was qualified for the 2022 AG and has replaced ice hockey in the extended programme since 2023

Note 4: Women's water polo team did not participate in the 2022 AG as more time will be required for rebuilding the team

(3) The Government's total actual expenditure in the previous round of programme was approximately \$110 million, including \$40 million on training-related funding and \$70 million on athlete allowances. There is a total of around \$20 million unspent balance remaining from the \$130 million earmarked funding. The total actual amount of government funding received by the relevant NSAs and the total number of athletes receiving allowances from 2018 to 2023 are listed as follows:

Sport	Amount of funding received (\$ million)	No. of athletes eligible for allowance (person)
Baseball (men)	12,367	2 013
Basketball (men and women)	12,336	1 859
Handball (men and women)	18,186	2 844
Hockey (men and women)	19,354	2 946

Ice Hockey (men and women) (Note 1)	15,228	2 312
Softball (women)	6,562	1 028
Volleyball (men and women)	13,584	2 156
Water Polo (men and women) (Note 2)	12,576	1 974
Football (women) (Note 3)	1,644	261

Note 1: Subsidised period for ice hockey was from January 2018 to December 2022

Note 2: Subsidised period for women's water polo was from January 2018 to December 2022

Note 3: Subsidised period for women's football was from January to December 2023

(4) The Coordinating Committee (Committee) was composed of representatives from the former Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the relevant NSAs to provide a platform for exchanging views on the implementation of training plans, further development plans and other strategic matters. According to our record, the Committee held meetings on December 21, 2017 and July 10, 2018. Starting from 2020, the former HAB (currently the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau) held regular review meetings with individual NSAs under the programme and conducted site visits to teams' training, which allowed for more in-depth discussions on their training and development plans, and provided more targeted recommendations and support to the teams.

The "Director of Audit's Report No. 74, April 2020" issued by the Audit Commission in 2022 pointed out that among the 12 teams participating in the 2018 AG, only three teams achieved the performance targets set before the Games. In this regard, the then Secretary for Home Affairs and the then Commissioner for Sports stated during a public hearing that the Hong Kong teams participating in the relevant team sports events of the 2018 AG had already been formed when the previous round of programme was launched in January 2018. Therefore, the Government's main focus in the previous round of programme was to provide venue support and resources for the team to hire coaches and supporting staff to systematically formulate and implement a five-year training plan with a view to improving their performances in the 2022 AG.

Whilst impacted by the three-year COVID-19 epidemic, six out of 11 participating teams showed improvement in their performances at the 2022 AG. We believe that the previous round of programme has played a positive role in enhancing the level of some of the team sports.