

LCQ11: Applications for processions and assemblies

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

The Government has emphasised that the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance will not affect the public's freedom of procession and assembly, and that the regulation of processions and assemblies is based on considerations under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of applications for letters of no objection to assemblies, processions and petitions received, approved and rejected by the Police in the past five years, as well as the reasons for refusing to issue such letters of no objection;

(2) among the applications mentioned in (1), of the main demands made by the applicant organisations for holding assemblies, processions and petitions, together with a breakdown by the government policy areas involved in such demands;

(3) of the respective conditions imposed by the Police under Cap. 245 in the past five years regarding each of the applications mentioned in (1); whether it has assessed if such conditions will restrict the public's right to participate in assemblies, processions and petitions;

(4) whether any organisation has refused to comply with the conditions mentioned in (3) and was denied a letter of no objection; if so, of the details (including but not limited to the contents of the applications and the organisation's appeal against the outcome of the applications); and

(5) whether any organisation has made a compromise proposal due to its disagreement with the conditions mentioned in (3); if so, of the following information about such proposals: the contents of the proposals, the number of proposals accepted and rejected, as well as the reasons for acceptance and rejection?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong citizens have the rights to peaceful assembly and procession conducted in accordance with the law. That said, these rights must be exercised in conformity with the relevant legislation to ensure the

safeguarding of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. The impact of such public events on members of the public should also be minimised.

Under the Public Order Ordinance (the Ordinance), in the event that the attendance of public meetings or public processions (whether its nature is related to petition or not) exceeds the respective limits prescribed in the Ordinance, i.e. public meetings of more than 50 persons or public processions of more than 30 persons, a notice must be given to the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) in accordance with the Ordinance. The meetings or processions can only be conducted if the Commissioner gives no prohibition or objection, and the requirements in the Ordinance as well as the conditions imposed by the Commissioner (if any) are complied with.

The reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen is as follows:

(1) The relevant figures of public meetings and public processions that had an attendance exceeding the prescribed limits and were required to notify to the Commissioner in the past five years are tabulated below:

Table 1: Public meetings

Year	No. of public meetings notified to the Police	No. of public meetings with letters of no objection issued	No. of public meetings for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	436	410	26
2020	71	45	26
2021	4	0	4
2022	2	2	0
2023	71	71	0

Table 2: Public processions

Year	No. of public processions notified to the Police	No. of public processions with letters of no objection issued	No. of public processions for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	495	474	21
2020	58	42	16
2021	5	1	4
2022	9	9	0
2023	270	270	0

Letters of no objection were not issued having regard to the interests of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. Every application was considered on a case-by-case basis.

(2) The public meetings or public processions organised by various bodies mainly include festival parades, charity walks as well as events relating to promotion of activities or expression of opinions. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) does not maintain statistical figures regarding the government policy areas concerned of these public meetings and public processions.

(3) to (5) Sections 9(4) and 14(5) of the Ordinance provide that the Commissioner shall not exercise the power conferred to him to prohibit the holding of a public meeting or object to the holding of a public procession in any case where he reasonably considers that the interests of national security or public safety, public order or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others could be met by the imposition of conditions.

The HKPF will maintain communication with the organisers and, upon careful examination on a case-by-case basis, assess the risks to ensure that the public meetings and public processions are conducted in a peaceful, safe and orderly manner in accordance with the law without jeopardising national security, endangering public safety, disrupting public order or infringing on others' rights and freedom. The HKPF may also impose certain conditions, such as requesting the organiser to arrange marshals to maintain order, etc, on a notified public meeting and public procession as reasonably necessary. Imposition of such conditions shall be justified on a proportionality analysis. Regarding the relevant arrangements, the HKPF has published the Guidelines on the approach to the Public Order Ordinance in relation to public meetings and public processions to help law enforcement officers and other parties to understand the mechanism.

Generally speaking, organisers of public meetings and public processions who were issued with letters of no objection could comply with the conditions imposed and conduct the events in an orderly manner. Under the individual circumstances that a person is aggrieved with the Commissioner's decision to prohibit the holding of a public meeting, to object to the holding of a public procession, or to impose conditions on a public meeting or public procession, he/she may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions.

The HKPF does not maintain a breakdown of statistical figures mentioned in the questions.

Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for May 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 12) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for May 2024.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs decreased from 43.8 in April 2024 in the contractionary zone to 43.0 in May 2024, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. June 2024) outlook DI on business receipts was 46.8. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for many surveyed sectors dropped in May 2024 as compared with previous month, particularly for the real estate (from 46.1 to 40.6) and business services (from 48.4 to 45.2).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades decreased from 46.4 in April 2024 to 45.2 in May 2024, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. June 2024) was 46.7.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that overall business sentiment among SMEs softened in May, with individual sectors showing mixed performance. Meanwhile, the overall expectations on the business situation in one month's time turned slightly better. The overall employment situation showed some improvement.

The spokesman added that while business sentiment will be affected by the complicated external environment in the near term, the continued growth of the economy should provide support. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

The Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected around the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Ping Wo Fund to launch anti-gambling publicity campaign](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee:

The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) and the Ping Wo Fund will launch a territory-wide anti-gambling publicity campaign called Stop Gambling. Be the Wise Man of the Match! in mid-June. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of gambling-related problems and promote no-gambling messages during the UEFA European Football Championship 2024 period.

The Fund will organise a range of district-level and territory-wide events and publicity activities from mid-June to mid-July, including an anti-gambling fun day and a football skills workshop to promote no-gambling messages to the community and share the joy of playing football with members of the public. A "Stop Gambling. Be the Wise Man of the Match!" thematic exhibition will also be held at different locations. The Fund has strengthened its publicity efforts on online media and traditional media, such as promoting anti-gambling messages on TV broadcasts before and after live broadcasts of matches to remind the public to stay away from gambling while enjoying the football matches.

Sponsored by the Fund and managed by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Even Centre, the Anti-Gambling Ping Wo Truck will also tour the territory and pay visits to schools to educate the public on the harm caused by a gambling addiction through a multimedia exhibition and interactive games.

In addition, the four counselling and treatment centres for gamblers financed by the Fund will step up their services, such as extending their service hours to answer the Gambling Counselling Hotline (183 4633) and respond to text messages received online or from instant messaging applications, and organise more outreach activities, so that those in need can receive timely and appropriate assistance.

The establishment of the Ping Wo Fund aims to finance public education and other measures to prevent or alleviate problems relating to gambling; provide counselling, treatment and other remedial or support services for gamblers with a gambling disorder and those affected by them; and conduct research and studies into problems and issues relating to gambling. The Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee is a non-statutory body to advise the HYAB on the use and application of the Fund.

For details of the anti-gambling publicity campaign, please visit the Fund website at www.donotgamble.org.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 is 106.4 (same as yesterday's index).

LCQ6: Developing tourism projects with local characteristics

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Fei and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

There are views that recently a film about the Kowloon Walled City, which receives critical acclaim and box office success, has once again demonstrated Hong Kong's strong cultural foundation, and given that Hong Kong enjoys the country's unequivocal support to develop into an East-meets-West

centre for international cultural exchange, the HKSAR Government should draw on the experience and proactively develop tourism projects with local characteristics in order to pursue the concept of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government indicated last month that it planned to support exhibitions and promotional activities related to the Kowloon Walled City through the Film Development Fund, how the Government allocates the relevant resources to ensure that they are used effectively and are able to continuously promote the internationalisation of Hong Kong films and the development of local cultural tourism;

(2) of the strategies or measures in place to enhance the international image of Hong Kong's characteristic cultural tourism and capitalise on the diversity of Hong Kong's culture in order to attract more international tourists to come to Hong Kong to experience its unique history and culture; and

(3) under the strategy of promoting "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", whether the Government has plans to introduce "educational tours" to further diversify Hong Kong's tourism industry and promote the characteristics of the HKSAR under "one country, two systems", so as to tell the good stories of Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is positioned as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) has been driving cultural tourism based on the principle of "shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism". The Government will join hands with the trade to implement the concept of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong's tourism industry and fully explore and make good use of Hong Kong's rich tourism resources.

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Tang Fei, the reply is as follows:

(1) The movie "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" has been very popular, rendering many visitors eager to know more about the story of Kowloon Walled City and the story behind the production of the movie. As such, the Government is in discussion with the film company to explore the possibility of displaying the film related materials such as stills, video footage and props of the film so as to attract visitors and drive tourism industry.

In fact, the Government has been supporting exhibitions and activities that promote film culture and film-related intellectual property rights through the Film Development Fund (FDF). We have also been actively promoting the internationalisation of Hong Kong films in recent years by participating

in Mainland and overseas film festivals and organising and subsidising Hong Kong film programmes. These not only help to increase the exposure of Hong Kong films, but also enrich Hong Kong's tourism elements. For example, this year we have led delegations from the film industry, bringing their films to the world's leading film festivals to promote Hong Kong films and tell the good stories of Hong Kong. The Government will continue to strengthen support to Hong Kong film industry through the FDF, increase the exposure of the Hong Kong film industry in the Mainland and global film markets, and leverage the cultural influence of films to strengthen tourism promotion and attract more visitors to Hong Kong. Besides, the Government just launched the new phase of the "City in Time" tourism project, which also incorporates film elements, allowing locals and visitors to enjoy classic Hong Kong film clips at filming locations as well as past appearance of Hong Kong.

(2) Hong Kong is a cultural melting pot of East and West. Our traditional and foreign festivals attract tourists from all over the world. Hong Kong also has many rich and vivid resources of the intangible cultural heritage such as the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, etc., which all feature very unique characteristics. Riding on different festivals, we will organise various activities to attract visitors such as the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races this weekend (June 15-16), Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnival in September, and the International Chinese New Year Night Parade in the Lunar New Year, for visitors to experience the lively atmosphere of traditional festivals. Besides, we have different activities to celebrate foreign festivals, including the "Hallo" Hong Kong Halloween in Halloween, featuring themed decorations at various tourist hotspots; the Hong Kong WinterFest and the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations at the end of each year, to celebrate the festive seasons with everyone. Through the "Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events", we also provide funding support for arts, culture and festive events with local characteristics or unique appeal of Hong Kong such as Yu Lan Cultural Festival, Hong Kong Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza, etc., with a view to enriching travel experience in Hong Kong.

Cultural events could help promote the development of tourism. As the East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the Government has been committed to showcasing Hong Kong's cultural and artistic vibe and vitality to the world by curating distinctive and unique cultural activities that attract visitors. This year for the first time, the CSTB launches Art March as a brand to promote multiple events organised, funded, or supported by the Government, to provide citizens and visitors with an enriched artistic journey. Meanwhile, we strive to curate cultural programmes that highlight the distinctive culture of Hong Kong. For example, we have launched an annual Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival since 2023, to attract the participation of locals and visitors through pop concerts, thematic exhibitions, film screenings, outdoor activities and outreach events etc. Traditional Chinese culture is a great attraction around the world. Starting this year, we organise the annual Chinese Culture Festival between June and September, offering more opportunities for both locals and visitors to appreciate Chinese culture. This year, Hong Kong will serve as the host city for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival for the

first time, allowing locals and visitors to experience the unique cultural charm of Hong Kong and different regions. Besides, the inaugural edition of Asia+ Festival was successfully held last year, with a focus on Asia and celebrating the cultural diversity of Asia and the Belt and Road regions.

In addition, the Government has also stepped up its efforts to promote characteristic tourism so that visitors can experience the unique local culture. We have launched the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" campaign in Old Town Central, Sham Shui Po and West Kowloon, and introduced quite some thematic walking routes to visitors. We also launched the Temple Street promotion last year to attract visitors to travel around local communities in Yau Ma Tei and Jordan to experience the most authentic side of Hong Kong. The Government has also been encouraging the trade to design more itineraries with different themes, covering cultural heritage, and has provided subsidies to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong in 2023 to organise the "Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition". We will continue to stage signature creative arts and cultural tourism projects with local elements such as the "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival", "Design District Hong Kong" (#ddHK).

Meanwhile, the Government will continue to organise "Hong Kong Week" in the Mainland and overseas to showcase the unique East-meets-West arts and cultural ambience of Hong Kong. Our Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas will also strengthen their promotion work on arts and culture, deepening cultural exchanges and promoting people-to-people bonds.

(3) The tourism industry of Hong Kong is mature. There are travel agents in the market providing different inbound tourism products in the serve of study tours.

In the above-mentioned "Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition", some winning itineraries included study tour such as the Hong Kong Manufacturing Study Tour, the Archaeology&Tour in Cheung Chau. We will continue to promote the winning itineraries and encourage the trade to develop more unique tourism products covering study themes.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has also consolidated study-related information to provide inbound study tours with references on different learning experiences and activities. The HKTB is also planning to invite travel trade partners to visit Hong Kong in the second half of the year to learn more about the relevant tourism resources to help the trade develop more study tour products with Hong Kong characteristics.

We will continue to make best use of Hong Kong's characteristics as a cultural melting pot of East and West and proactively develop tourism projects with local characteristics so as to provide visitors with diversified travel experiences, and reinforce and strengthen Hong Kong's position as "the best tourism destination".