

LCQ19: Online ride-hailing services

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

It is learnt that online ride-hailing services have been in the ascendant around the world in recent years, and there is considerable public demand for point-to-point transport services, resulting in competition between online car hailing platforms and the taxi trade in recent years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) the respective numbers of traffic incidents, accidents, complaints and prosecutions involving taxis and online hailed cars in the past three years, with a breakdown by month and type; of the subject matters of the complaints received;

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on online ride-hailing services; if so, (i) of the public demand for online ride-hailing services, and (ii) the number of members of the public using online ride-hailing services, in each month of the past three years; whether it has analysed the utilisation rate and trend of online ride-hailing services, as well as the reasons for members of the public using online hailed cars and their usage habits (such as for long-haul or short-haul trips);

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on the impact of the use of online ride-hailing services by members of the public on the business operation of other point-to-point transport service operators in the past three years, including whether a decline in the patronage and business turnover of the taxi trade has thus been resulted; and

(4) given that in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Government has indicated that it is exploring the regulation of online car hailing platforms and plans to communicate with and listen to the views of Members of this Council, the trade and other relevant stakeholders in the middle of this year on policy and legal perspectives involved in the relevant regulation, as well as the key considerations derived from study on overseas experience, whether the study has covered the regulation over the vehicles and drivers of online car hailing platforms, the regions from which experiences have been drawn, and the conclusions reached; whether it will conduct public consultation on the regulation of online car hailing platforms?

Reply:

President,

Personalised point-to-point transport services are crucial to the local transport system. Currently, taxis constitute the majority of personalised

point-to-point transport services, while the role of hire cars with permits in the current transport system is to mainly supplement services that are not provided by existing means of public transport, with a view to meeting specific travel needs. My reply to the various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng is as follows:

(1) With regard to taxis, the number of traffic accidents involving taxis in each of the past three years (i.e. 2021 to 2023) is 4 153, 3 632 and 4 585 respectively. The number of complaints received by the Transport Department against taxi drivers involving in cases of a more serious nature (i.e. overcharging, refusing hire (including refusing or neglecting to accept a hire, and refusing or neglecting to drive a taxi to the place indicated by a hirer) and driving to a destination other than by the most direct practicable route) is provided at Annex 1.

On law enforcement front, according to the information provided by the Hong Kong Police Force, the number of enforcement actions taken against taxi driver-related offences of a more serious nature in each of the past three years is set out at Annex 2.

The Government does not maintain a breakdown of traffic accidents or complaints involving online ride-hailing services. As a reference, the number of enforcement actions taken by the Police against cases involving illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward in the past three years is about 80.

(2), (3) and (4) The Government has no statistics on the questions raised, but has all long been striving to enhance personalised point-to-point transport services. While the Government is open-minded in respect of the use of different communications technologies, including the use of online or mobile applications for hailing/booking taxis or hire cars with permits, the laws and regulations must be complied with in using new technologies or platforms, thereby safeguarding the safety and interests of passengers, ensuring the efficient use of road networks, as well as maintaining the highly efficient and reliable services and the long-term healthy development of the public transport system, which is currently used by over 90 per cent of the public. In respect of taxis, the Government earlier launched a series of measures to enhance the overall quality of relevant services, including the introduction of a taxi fleet regime. Under the taxi fleet regime, Fleet Licensees are required to provide online booking channels (including mobile applications and websites), under which a passenger may book a trip, lodge enquiries and complaints, and rate the driver's performance upon completion of a trip.

The Government is aware of the public's concern and views about the illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward and the regulation of online hailing platforms. The Government is reviewing how to enhance the existing legislation in order to combat illegal activities more effectively on the one hand, and exploring how to regulate online hailing platforms on the other hand, thereby only allowing taxis and hire cars with permits to provide services through the platforms. We are studying the experiences of different places; and the Government plans to communicate with members of the

Legislative Council, the trade and other stakeholders in the middle of this year on policy and legal perspectives involved in the relevant regulation, as well as the key considerations derived from the study on experiences of other places. After hearing the views of the stakeholders, we will map out the way forward for meeting the public's demand for quality personalised point-to-point transport services.

Meanwhile, the Police will continue to combat illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward. The Police will follow up and investigate the information provided by the public to report illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward in a serious manner, and take enforcement actions against relevant activities if there is sufficient evidence.

LCQ10: Electric mobility devices

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The Government indicated in its paper (the paper) submitted to the Panel on Transport of this Council in June last year that it planned to commence a legislative amendment exercise on electric mobility devices (EMDs) in the second half of last year with a view to submitting the amendments to this Council as soon as possible. Yet, one year has passed, and the amendments have yet to be submitted to this Council for scrutiny. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will commence a legislative exercise for the regulation of various EMDs, including but not limited to electric unicycles, self-balancing scooters, electric scooters, motorised skateboards and electric bicycles; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; how it will tighten regulation over EMDs prior to the completion of legislation, such as whether it will step up enforcement to ensure the safety of EMD users and other road users;

(2) whether it has plans to enact corresponding legislation for the regulation of relevant equipment of various EMDs (such as headlamps and braking systems); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that the Government indicated in the paper that it proposed to open a number of designated cycle tracks for use of relevant EMDs in the first phase, of the cycle tracks to be opened in the first phase, and the timetable for opening other cycle tracks in the next phase; and

(4) whether it has plans to refurbish cycle tracks over the territory, so

that all of them can meet the safety requirements for shared use by conventional bicycles and various types of EMDs; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) As electric mobility devices (EMDs) are mechanically propelled, they fall within the definition of "motor vehicles" under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) (Ordinance) and must therefore be licensed before use on roads or private roads. From the road safety or accessibility perspective, EMDs are not suitable for sharing road space with ordinary vehicles or being used on footpaths. Moreover, the quality of unregulated EMDs varies and they pose potential safety hazards in various aspects. It is the long-standing policy of the Government not to register or license EMDs under the existing Ordinance. Therefore, the use of EMDs on roads or private roads (including footpaths) will be regarded as driving unlicensed "motor vehicles" and hence contravene relevant laws.

On law enforcement, "road safety" is one of the Police's operational priorities, with combating the illegal use of EMDs being one of its selected traffic enforcement priorities. The Police will continue to tackle the illegal use of EMDs through its publicity and educational efforts as well as enforcement actions, with a view to ensuring road safety.

The number of persons arrested by the Police for illegal use of EMDs from 2021 to March 2024 is set out in the table below:

2021	2022	2023	2024 (from January to March)
207	236	267	57

With the rising prevalence of EMDs, the Government is currently formulating proper regulatory arrangements for EMDs so as to ensure their safe and effective uses while allowing more room for the adoption of new technologies and innovation. The EMDs planned to be regulated can be classified mainly into two categories, including motorised personal mobility devices (PMDs) (such as electric scooters, motorised skateboards, electric unicycles and electric hoverboards) and power assisted pedal cycles (PAPCs) (i.e. bicycles or tricycles that are equipped with an auxiliary electric motor and motorised assistance will only be provided when the riders are pedalling. Such motorised assistance will be cut out once a certain speed is reached). As for electric bicycles propelled by a throttle button, as the operation mode of such electric bicycles is similar to that of electric motor

cycles, they should be regulated in accordance with the existing legislation relating to motor cycles.

The establishment of a regulatory framework for EMDs will necessitate amendments to the legislation. We are currently considering the views of relevant government departments and stakeholders and drafting the legislative amendments, with a view to ensuring the effective regulation of the use of EMDs. The proposed legislative amendments will be submitted to the Legislative Council in due course.

(2) Under the proposed regulatory arrangements, EMDs should meet relevant technical requirements, including those on headlamps and braking systems, with details listed in the table below:

Proposed technical and safety requirements for motorised PMDs and PAPCs

	Motorised PMDs	PAPCs
Maximum net weight	20 kg	25 kg
Maximum design speed	25 km/h	Up to 25 km/h with auxiliary power
Maximum width	650 mm	
Maximum length	1 250 mm	1 800 mm
Maximum number of wheels	1-2 (wheel set(s)*)	2-3
Safety requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fitted with a front white lamp and a rear red lamp • fitted with a rear red reflector • fitted with an effective braking/stopping system • fitted with a warning device • complying with relevant international standards • no passengers allowed 	

*If the distance between two centre points of the wheel-to-ground contact areas is less than 300 mm, the two wheels can be regarded as being in one wheel set.

(3) and (4) Our proposed technical and safety requirements for EMDs are intended to enable compliant EMDs to be used on cycle tracks to be similar to that of conventional bicycles in terms of operating speed, space required and manoeuvres. Since the operation mode of PAPCs is quite similar to that of conventional pedal bicycles, we propose allowing PAPCs to be used on all cycle tracks. As regards motorised PMDs, given that these devices are a new mode of personal mobility and that the questionnaire survey conducted earlier on the trial schemes indicated that some respondents had reservations about the use of EMDs, we propose adopting a prudent approach by opening cycle tracks for use of motorised PMDs by the public in phases under suitable circumstances. For the initial phase, the cycle track sections being considered to be opened for use have to be at least 3.5 metres wide with high connectivity (such as the cycle tracks in Tseung Kwan O South and near the

Pak Shek Kok Promenade). We will review whether more suitable cycle tracks will be opened for use taking into account the effectiveness in due course. In addition, the TD will continue to conduct review from time to time and where the road environment permits, improve existing cycle tracks and relevant facilities in new towns. In planning for the provision of cycle tracks in new towns and new development areas, the Government will consider how the shared use of cycle tracks by bicycles and compliant EMDs can be achieved.

Applications for new niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium and Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium to close on June 12

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 5) reminded those who wish to apply for allocation of new extendable niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI in Fanling or Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium in Eastern District for the deceased to submit their applications as soon as possible since the application will close on June 12 (Wednesday).

An FEHD spokesman said, "For this niche allocation exercise, a total of 8 040 extendable niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI will be allocated, including 8 000 standard niches (4 000 smoke-free niches and 4 000 non-smoke-free niches) and 40 large niches (20 smoke-free niches and 20 non-smoke-free niches). As for Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium, a total of 10 060 extendable niches including 10 000 standard niches (5 000 smoke-free niches and 5 000 non-smoke-free niches) and 60 large niches (30 smoke-free niches and 30 non-smoke-free niches) will be allocated."

Members of the public can visit the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk) for details of this niche allocation exercise, make an online application or download the application forms. Leaflets and application forms are also available at the department's Hong Kong or Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office, District Environmental Hygiene Offices and Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department. In addition, members of the public may call the hotline 2841 9111 or send an email to apply_newniche@feh.gov.hk for enquiries and request application forms by fax (2333 1716).

The spokesman encouraged applicants to apply online so as to avoid postal delay/non-delivery. If the applicant is the same person who applied for the cremation service for the deceased, it will be more convenient for them to submit an online application through the "iAM Smart" as copies of the required documents are not required. Applications can also be submitted by the above-mentioned fax or email, by post or in person to the FEHD Hong Kong or the Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office.

To avoid missing the application deadline this time, the spokesman reminded those who wish to apply for allocation of the above niches for the deceased to submit the completed application forms together with the copies of required documents on or before June 12.

Information on the Cemeteries and Crematoria Offices and the Public Niche Allocation Office of the FEHD is as follows:

Hong Kong Cemeteries and Crematoria Office
Address: 1J Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong
Tel: 2570 4318
Fax: 2591 1879

Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Office
Address: Upper Ground Floor, 6 Cheong Hang Road, Hung Hom, Kowloon
Tel: 2365 5321
Fax: 2176 4963

Public Niche Allocation Office
Address: Units 3501-3511 and 3520-3525, 35/F, Tower 1, Metroplaza, 223 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Fong, NT
Tel: 2330 5635
Fax: 2333 1716

[LCQ15: Taxi fleet regime](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Edward Leung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

As announced by the Government in July last year, a taxi fleet regime would be introduced, with no more than five taxi fleet licences intended to be issued; and the deadline for interested parties to apply for taxi fleet licence was the 31st of last month. Moreover, it has been reported that the Government expects to issue the licenses in the middle of this year, and the taxi fleets will be in operation within one year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total number of applications for taxi fleet licence received by the Government; of the specific criteria to be adopted for selection, and whether it will consider including the public's opinions as one of the selection criteria;

(2) whether it has formulated a punishment mechanism to impose punishment on any fleet for failing to meet the conditions of operation and standard of

service pledged in licence application, including whether it will revoke the licence of the fleet whose members have repeatedly made serious mistakes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that under the taxi fleet regime, fleet licensees must provide online booking channels, including mobile applications and websites, thus making it necessary for passengers to download multiple applications or browse multiple websites in order to compare the services of all fleets, whether the Government will request fleet licensees to consolidate the online booking services and provide one-stop online booking service and performance rating function for passengers on the dedicated webpage for taxi fleet services set up by the Transport Department, with a view to enhancing user experience and promoting healthy competition among the fleets; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that the police have, in collaboration with parties such as the taxi trade, launched the three-month Lan Kwai Fong Taxi Ambassadors Scheme since April this year, under which taxi information cards are provided to passengers before boarding at designated taxi stands for recording information, such as the estimated fares, taxi licence plate numbers and destinations, of the effectiveness of the Scheme; whether it has plans to further extend the Scheme to taxi stands in various districts; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) whether it has compiled statistics on the current number of taxis in Hong Kong which offer at least one e-payment means for fare, and their proportion in the overall number of taxis in Hong Kong; and

(6) whether it has considered, by way of legislation or revising the conditions for licence renewal of taxi drivers, making it mandatory for non-fleet taxi drivers to provide at least one QR code e-payment means for fare collection; whether it will make the Smart Traffic Fund available to non-fleet taxi drivers for application for installing devices which support e-payment, so as to encourage them to install such devices to enhance the standard of service?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force, our reply to the Hon Edward Leung's question is as follows:

The Government has earlier reviewed the overall operation and management of taxis and introduced a series of measures to enhance the quality of taxi service and promote the development of the trade. Such measures include the introduction of a new taxi fleet regime, under which operators may assemble existing taxis to form a fleet and apply to the TD for a Taxi Fleet Licence. The application period for Taxi Fleet Licences just ended at the end of last month. The Government expects to announce the application results in July this year.

(1) The TD received a total of 15 applications within the application period. The assessment panel formed by representatives of the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the TD will assess the applications received in accordance with the marking scheme provided in the invitation document issued earlier. The main assessment criteria are (i) management capability of applicant; (ii) vehicle quality and safety-related equipment/devices; (iii) management and quality of fleet drivers; (iv) service level and customer service; (v) online hailing and fleet dispatch plan; and (vi) daily operation, maintenance and contingency plan.

(2) Throughout the licence period, taxi fleet licensees (Fleet Licensees) must maintain proper and efficient fleet services to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport (Commissioner). This includes, but not limited to, maintaining services in accordance with the statutory requirements, the terms and conditions of the Fleet Licence and any direction given by the Commissioner in accordance with the law. The TD will closely monitor the operation of the taxi fleets and conduct mid-term appraisal of the performance of the Fleet Licensees. The result of the mid-term appraisal will be taken into account in deciding whether or not an application for an extension of the licence period will be granted.

During the licence period, if the Commissioner has reason to believe that a Fleet Licensee fails to maintain proper and efficient fleet services, he or she may appoint a public officer to conduct an inquiry. If the inquiry confirms that the Fleet Licensee is not performing up to standard, the Commissioner may punish the Fleet Licensee by cancelling the Fleet Licence, suspending the Fleet Licence for a period of time, varying the Fleet Licence (e.g. in respect of the licence period or the number of taxis operating under the fleet), and/or cancelling or suspending the fleet taxi certificates of particular fleet taxis (meaning that the fleet taxis concerned are not allowed to operate under the fleet).

(3) The TD will, through licence conditions, require Fleet Licensees to provide mobile hailing application, webpage and telephone hotline for passengers to book fleet taxis. For the convenience of passengers, when the taxi fleets come into operation, the TD will also launch a dedicated webpage listing the webpages or QR code links of each fleet to facilitate one-stop search for booking methods of different taxi fleets. In addition, according to the licence conditions, Fleet Licensee is required to open and share the relevant data (including but not limited to the real-time location of each fleet taxi, vehicle type and the operating status of each fleet taxi) during the licence period, so as to enable third party developers to set up third-party platforms (e.g. fare comparison platforms) to facilitate comparison of fares of different fleet taxis by passengers.

(4) Since the launch of the Lan Kwai Fong Taxi Ambassadors Scheme on April 5 this year, more than 7 000 members of the public and tourists have been assisted in taking taxis. The said scheme has successfully enhanced communication between passengers and taxi drivers, and reduced misunderstandings arising from language barriers or lack of understanding of the taxi fare scale. It also effectively strengthened the deterrent effect

against unscrupulous taxi drivers.

The TD will continue to remind taxi drivers through various channels to abide by the law and treat passengers with courtesy. The TD also welcomes the trade to continue to organise and take part in activities that help enhance the taxi trade's image, and make concerted efforts to combat the black sheep of the industry and improve the overall quality of taxi service.

(5) and (6) The Government has been encouraging the taxi trade to introduce different electronic payment (e-payment) methods to facilitate payment of fares by passengers. Currently, some taxi drivers accept e-payment (such as Alipay and WeChat Pay which support QR code payment, and Octopus which supports non-QR code payment) for settling fares. Besides, a number of taxi hailing mobile applications in the market accept payment of fares by passengers using different e-payment methods (e.g. credit card, WeChat Pay and Alipay). The Government does not maintain figures of taxis installed with e-payment systems.

Under the taxi fleet regime, the TD will, through licence conditions, require all fleet taxis to provide at least two types of e-payment methods (including QR code and non-QR code payment methods), so as to facilitate payment of fares by passengers. The taxi fleets will set a leading and exemplary role in the trade, and will help further encourage more taxi drivers to introduce e-payment methods so that passengers will have more choices in fare payment. As the existing taxi licenses are permanent in nature and are not subject to renewal, the Government cannot add new license conditions on these licenses to make it mandatory for non-fleet taxis to provide e-payment methods. The Government will continue to promote and encourage the taxi trade to introduce e-payment methods through different ways at this stage.

As regards the Smart Traffic Fund (STF), it provides funding support to local enterprises or organisations, including the taxi trade, for conducting research and application of innovative vehicle-related technology. The STF has approved six projects relating to taxi services to date, including a research project on the development of a smart meter system which provides auto-payment function.

Missing girl in Mong Kok located

A girl who went missing in Mong Kok has been located.

Cheung Sin-yu, aged 12, went missing after she was last seen at MTR Prince Edward Station on June 1 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on June 2.

The girl returned to her residence yesterday (June 4) evening. She

sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.