

## LCQ9: Enhancing public's knowledge of history of patriotic labour movement

Following is a question by the Hon Kingsley Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

Many members of the public consider that the "Canton-Hong Kong Strike", which broke out in 1925, is a world's astonishing patriotic movement against imperialism. During the 16 months of the movement, over 200 000 people in Hong Kong joined the strike, representing about a quarter of the population at that time. As the movement not only aroused the sense of national identity and patriotic love of Chinese people, but also forced the British Hong Kong Government to adjust its governing policy with reduced discrimination and oppression against Chinese people in Hong Kong, it is an important teaching resource for promoting the spirit of patriotism. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that next year marks the 100th anniversary of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike, whether the Working Group on Patriotic Education under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee will launch patriotic education activities for commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike in order to stimulate patriotic love and cohesiveness in society; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has established the Chinese Culture Promotion Office (CCPO) to coordinate, plan and implement programmes to promote Chinese culture and history, whether the CCPO will organize an exhibition or a special exhibition for commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that many members of the public consider that the Government has not attached importance to major historical events in Hong Kong's patriotic labour movement, such as the "Seamen's Strike" and "Uprising of the Two Airlines", whether the Government will strengthen the promotion of the spirit of patriotism as enshrined in the relevant events and step up its publicity and education efforts in the future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Kingsley Wong is as follows:

The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address last year that patriotic education would be rolled out and be integrated into our education system, and a Working Group on Patriotic Education (Working Group) would be established under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee led by the Chief Secretary for Administration.

The Working Group was established on April 8 this year. Its membership comprised the relevant Director of Bureaux and Heads of Departments, as well as representatives from relevant sectors of society. Four sub-groups were set up under the Working Group, namely School Education Sub-group, Local Community Sub-group, History, Politics, Economy and Culture Sub-group, and Media Publicity Sub-group to research on, recommend and coordinate for the introduction of different policy measures relating to patriotic education.

The Working Group held its first meeting on April 29, setting down a clear objective: to make patriotism with affection to our country and Hong Kong a mainstream core value in Hong Kong, with a view to enabling the spirit of patriotism to take root in society and people's heart, such that members of the public would proactively and consciously safeguard national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The Working Group has also set a clear direction, that is on one hand to dovetail with the Patriotic Education Law of the People's Republic of China, while at the same time adjust suitably having regard to the actual circumstances in Hong Kong. The Working Group will tender advice on policy measures for effectively promoting patriotic education.

Patriotic education is rich in content, covering various aspects including history, culture, traditions, and symbols and signs of our country. In examining the overall strategy and specific initiatives for rolling out patriotic education, the Working Group will holistically consider all relevant factors including the historical and cultural connotations and values of each of the projects as well as their symbolic meaning, rally efforts of the HKSAR Government and the community, and adopt suitable approaches and channels for taking forward related work, so as to deepen the understanding of the public on the history, culture, development and remarkable achievements of our country, thereby strengthening their awareness and sense of patriotism.

The Working Group is inviting all sectors of the community to offer their valuable suggestions on how to promote patriotic education. We also note the suggestion of promoting the history of patriotic labour movement in Hong Kong. The Working Group will, in due course, consolidate the views and suggestions collected, to give comprehensive consideration and make specific recommendations.

Regarding the suggestion to organise an exhibition for commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is exploring the feasibility of the suggestion, which includes collaborating with cultural institutions and museums on the Mainland to enrich the related exhibits and historical information. Besides, the LCSD is also planning to organise public and education programmes, such as talks, next year to enhance public understanding of the history of the

## LCQ10: Facilitating entry of personnel from higher education institutions in Mainland cities of Greater Bay Area into Hong Kong

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) puts forward developing an education and talents hub, and supporting higher education institutions from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in jointly operating education institutions as well as the development of GBA into an international demonstration zone for education. On the other hand, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Hong Kong Baptist University have established campuses in Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Zhuhai respectively. It is learnt that given the diversified collaboration between the Hong Kong and Mainland campuses of these universities, there is a need for teaching and research staff as well as students of the Mainland campuses to visit the Hong Kong campuses frequently. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that while the aforesaid students of the Mainland campuses may take programmes co-organised by the Mainland and Hong Kong campuses, which generally require them to attend classes in Hong Kong for two or more days a week, those students can hardly attend all classes in Hong Kong as they are ineligible for applying student visas, coupled with the fact that students not taking co-organised programmes may also need to come to Hong Kong to participate in academic activities such as talks or seminars, whether the authorities will issue the students in need with special student visas; and

(2) given that while professors as well as research and development personnel of the Mainland campuses can apply for "exit endorsement for talents" and stay in Hong Kong for a maximum duration of 30 days for each visit, foreign teaching and research staff are ineligible for applying the exit endorsement, whether the authorities can discuss with the relevant Mainland authorities the expansion of application of the exit endorsement to cover foreign teaching and research staff or issue them with special work visas, so as to facilitate their teaching, research and academic exchange work in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong's post-secondary education sector has been fully leveraging the institutional advantages of enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", and actively serving the country's needs by contributing Hong Kong's strengths. To fully seize the opportunities brought about by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the Government supports Hong Kong's higher education institutions capitalising on the characteristics and strengths of Hong Kong through the establishment of multilateral and cross-disciplinary partnerships in the Mainland cities of the GBA, so as to create favourable conditions for research development, knowledge transfer and industrialisation, thereby promoting research activities of a high academic standard in the GBA. Meanwhile, the Government will continue to actively participate in and promote higher education co-operation in the GBA. We will assist Hong Kong's higher education institutions in exploring more flexible and innovative operation models to promote closer collaboration with their campuses in the Mainland cities of the GBA and facilitate the flow of faculty members and students, with a view to nurturing outstanding talent for the country's development through close collaboration between the Hong Kong and Mainland campuses in teaching and research. Apart from Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou), which have established their presence in the GBA, the establishment of City University of Hong Kong (Dongguan) was also approved in April this year for an official opening in September this year.

After our consultation with the Security Bureau and the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, our consolidated reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon William Wong is as follows:

(1) With the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, Hong Kong's higher education institutions have actively strengthened the exchanges and interactions among the faculty members and students of the Hong Kong and Mainland campuses, and launched various joint programmes to enrich the learning experience of students from both campuses.

Under the prevailing requirements, a person who takes up studies in a full-time locally-accredited post-secondary programme (including eligible short-term courses) or part-time locally-accredited taught postgraduate local programme may apply to the Immigration Department (ImmD) for a visa/entry permit to enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) for study, while locally-accredited post-secondary programmes refer to programmes leading to degrees awarded by local degree-awarding institutions. Moreover, a student who is admitted on exchange in full-time locally-accredited local programmes at sub-degree level for not more than six months or exchange in full-time locally-accredited local or non-local programmes at undergraduate or above level for not more than one year may also make an application. If any joint programmes offered by an institution meet the above requirements,

students concerned may submit an application under the mechanism.

The HKSAR Government will continue to liaise closely with the relevant higher education institutions and assist them in maintaining communication with the relevant departments and the Mainland authorities on the immigration arrangements for the relevant students.

(2) The HKSAR Government has been actively attracting and retaining talent, and will continue to assist Hong Kong's higher education institutions in discussing with the relevant Mainland authorities the arrangements for facilitating the travel of relevant expatriates between the Hong Kong and Mainland campuses under the education collaboration framework, with a view to further promoting the interactions and exchanges of talent in the GBA, and building a high-level talent cluster in the GBA.

In order to promote the development of relevant sectors and raise Hong Kong's international profile, the HKSAR Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors in June 2022 (the Pilot Scheme), providing immigration facilitation for visitors participating in short-term activities in designated sectors in Hong Kong. Organisations authorised by the relevant bureaux or departments of the HKSAR Government can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors and receive remuneration without the need to apply for employment visas from the ImmD. The duration of participation in specified short-term activities is up to 14 consecutive calendar days (counting from the day when the eligible visitors start to participate in such activities). The authorised organisations in the Higher Education sector under the Pilot Scheme include the University Grants Committee-funded universities named in the question, and the short-term activities covered include attending conferences, seminars, academic workshops, guest lectures, educational activities, as well as conducting surveys and research. If invited by authorised organisations to participate in designated short-term activities under the Pilot Scheme, foreign teaching and research staff working on the Mainland can also enjoy the facilitation of not having to apply for employment visas. Relevant institutions can continue to make good use of the Pilot Scheme to provide facilitation for foreign teaching and research staff to engage in specified short-term activities in Hong Kong. For details, please refer to the ImmD's website: [www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/stv.html](http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/stv.html).

The HKSAR Government will continue to facilitate the pooling of various types of talent, including teaching and research personnel, for exchanges in Hong Kong, especially the two-way flow of talent between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and review the relevant policies in a timely manner.

---

## LCQ15: Strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

As pointed out in a research publication released by the Legislative Council Secretariat this month, Seoul, South Korea, Tokyo metropolis, Japan and Singapore have implemented different new facilitative services and/or tourist-friendly initiatives that provide visitors with a fresh post-pandemic travel experience. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will, by drawing reference from Seoul's initiatives, provide free high-speed public Wi-Fi services in all public places and introduce local culture and heritage through free guided tours at popular tourist attractions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will, by drawing reference from Japan's experience in building a network of "hands-free travel" service (i.e. a delivery service initiative to relieve tourists of the burden of carrying heavy luggage when travelling between destinations), set up tourism counters at the airport, MTR stations, shops and hotels to provide delivery services for tourists, so as to encourage them to stay longer; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it knows if the new courtesy campaign to be launched by the Hong Kong Tourism Board will, by drawing reference from Singapore's territory-wide courtesy promotion, systematically build a city and cultural identity with niceness and courtesy, and keep track of the courtesy and customer satisfaction trends through conducting regular surveys, thereby enabling the identification of service gaps in different tourism-related sectors; if the campaign will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has further explored other tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to providing visitors with high quality tourism services and enriching their travel experience, leaving them with good impression and memorable experience during their stay in Hong Kong. In respect of the questions raised by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai, after consultation with the relevant policy bureaux and departments, the replies are as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Government launched the common brand of "Wi-Fi.HK" in 2014 in collaboration with public and private organisations to facilitate the public and visitors to locate and access the free public Wi-Fi hotspots across Hong Kong offered by over 190 public and private organisations. Users can connect to the free Wi-Fi service for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours per day without registration. As of April 2024, the number of hotspots under the "Wi-Fi.HK" brand was about 45 000 with an extensive coverage of locations such as the airport, all land and sea boundary control points, numerous promenades, tourist attractions, food and beverage venues, stores, shopping malls, museums, parks, etc. Besides, the "Wi-Fi.HK" service has been further extended to some 3 600 buses and taxis as well as the Airport Express as mobile hotspots to facilitate the public and visitors' access to free Wi-Fi service at anytime and anywhere. The Government has published such information through different channels (including in collaboration with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB)) and put up "Wi-Fi.HK" brand in the venues concerned so as to let the public and visitors know about the service availability.

â€‹In terms of local culture and tradition promotions, the HKTB has been showcasing Hong Kong's unique culture through different promotional activities and channels to offer new tourism experience by consolidating a series of itinerary guides and information on different activities on DiscoverHongKong.com website and setting up visitor centres at Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point and Tsim Sha Tsui to provide tourists with practical travel information, guidebooks, maps, etc, and recommend attractions, major events and different cultural and festival celebrations in Hong Kong to tourists in planning their visit.

Guided tour services are mainly provided by operators of tourist attractions. For individual attractions such as Tai Kwun, M+, Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Art, etc, free guided tour services are available to allow visitors to have a more in-depth understanding on the exhibits and the architectural design of the attractions. Tourism Commission (TC), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, has launched the "Hong Kong Young Ambassador Scheme". Young ambassadors promote Hong Kong to visitors and demonstrate hospitality spirits through their participation in mega events (such as Hong Kong Cyclothon and Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival) and stationing at tourist attractions (such as Ngong Ping 360 (NP360) and Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP)).

(2) The Hong Kong International Airport provides baggage delivery service from the airport to downtown or from a designated location downtown to the airport, so as to let passengers travel hassle free in Hong Kong.

Besides, baggage delivery services are provided on selected homeport ship calls at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (KTCT). The services enable debarking cruise passengers to send their baggage to the airport or other locations in Hong Kong before exploring the city hassle-free. Hotels in general will offer their guests free baggage storage services and assist them to arrange baggage

delivery services.

(3) The Government acknowledges the importance of quality tourism services in Hong Kong and has been promoting enhancement of service quality by all sectors of the community. Members of the public are also encouraged to extend warm hospitality to visitors. We will mobilise the resources and network in 18 districts to promote courtesy at district level. Besides promotion, education is also of utmost importance. In collaboration with schools, we will reinforce courtesy education to school children. The HKTB will continue to encourage the trade, the community and the public to put good hospitality into action as excellent hosts, so as to enhance visitors' experience in Hong Kong. According to HKTB's survey, visitor satisfaction was 8.7 points out of 10, exceeding pre-pandemic level. The HKTB has since January 2024 enhanced the "Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme" by revising the scheme's assessment criteria for merchants, hence increasing the weighting of staff performance to recognise the importance of service quality and further enhance the service quality. Following the "Professional Quality Tourism Services Pledge" launched last year, the HKTB will produce a series of training videos to demonstrate professional and quality services, helping the trade to train frontline staff. The HKTB also worked with a local broadcaster to present a reality show, which put Hong Kong's service quality to test with a view to showcasing the spirit of professional quality tourism services.

Besides, the HKTB and the QTS Association will continue to organise "Outstanding QTS Merchant and Staff Awards" to commend QTS-accredited merchants and staff for their outstanding performance in promoting quality tourism services in Hong Kong.

At the community level, the HKTB is expanding the "Hong Kong Pals" volunteer programme to recruit more volunteers with a passion for tourism, especially the youth, to become an excellent host for our visitors and share with them knowledge and advice on travelling in Hong Kong. The HKTB will also launch a series of new promotions to encourage the public to demonstrate good hospitality.

(4) The Government and the trade attach great importance to offering pleasant travel experience to visitors so as to attract more visitors to come. Since 2001, the TC has been collaborating with the HKTB in implementing the "Visitor Signage Improvement Scheme" with a view to providing a co-ordinated and easily identified system of signage for visitors to Hong Kong. In addition, visitor signages are installed on travel routes to facilitate visitors' journeys from public transport hubs, such as MTR stations, bus terminals, etc, to nearby major tourist attractions to promote visitor convenience.

The TC, in collaboration with the Transport Department, has been erecting direction signs with brown background for some major tourist attractions since 2019, including Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, the Peak, HKWP, NP360, etc, for easy recognition by drivers and to direct them to tourist attractions.



The Government has included various tourist-friendly and facilitation initiatives when taking forward tourism projects. For example, all the artworks and signages of the "Yim Tin Tsai Arts Festival" from 2019 to 2021 and the "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival" from 2022 to 2024 were provided with QR codes connecting to the websites of the Festivals. Besides, QR codes were also embedded in the upgraded facilities of the Wong Nai Chung Gap Trail and Wisdom Path, as well as the artworks along the Sun Yat Sen Historical Trail, to help visitors understand the history along the trails. Real-time weather panels and interpretation panels with QR codes linked to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's "Enjoy Hiking" thematic website and TC's website were also introduced under the Enhancement of Hiking Trails to facilitate visitors in getting more information.

The Government is also dedicated to improving the facilities of public toilets at major tourist attractions. From December 2020 to February 2024, after taking into account the TC's view and the respective utilisation rates of the public toilets, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department had completed the refurbishment/facelifting works for eight public toilets, such as the public toilets at the Peak Tower, Stanley Municipal Services Building, Hoi Ha, Kat O Chau Pier and Sha Kiu (Leung Shuen Wan), etc.

We also encourage tourist attractions to provide more tourist-friendly initiatives. Popular tourist attractions including Ocean Park Hong Kong, Hong Kong Disneyland, the Peak Tram, NP360 and museums all accept online reservations and ticket purchasing, accepting different types of digital payment to facilitate visitors to make online payment and reservations. Individual attractions also provide audio guided tour, baggage storage and/or self-service lockers services to facilitate tourists.

We are devoted to providing more tourism facilities to enhance tourists' experience. For example, the HKTB will organise briefing sessions for the trade on the needs of Muslim visitors in terms of food and beverage, accommodations and attraction facilities, so as to foster development of Muslim-friendly tourism facilities to fulfil demands of Muslim visitors and enhance their travelling experience in Hong Kong.

---

## **Shipping Legislation (Electronic Certificates and Electronic Documents) (Amendment) Bill 2024 to be gazetted on Friday**

The Shipping Legislation (Electronic Certificates and Electronic Documents) (Amendment) Bill 2024 will be published in the Gazette this Friday

(May 24) to amend three pieces of shipping legislation, namely the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Cap. 313), Merchant Shipping (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Ordinance (Cap. 413) and Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548), to facilitate the use of electronic certificates/licences/permits/documents (collectively referred to as e-certs) for local vessels and their operators, as well as visiting ocean-going vessels.

The use of e-certs and electronic logbooks (e-logbooks) for Hong Kong-registered ships and local vessels was announced in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address, with a view to further enhancing the efficiency of marine services. Phase 1 of the amendment to marine legislations came into force on July 21, 2023, and implemented the use of e-certs and e-logbooks for Hong Kong-registered ships and their seafarers. The current legislative amendment mainly aims to extend the use of e-certs to local vessels, their operators, and visiting ocean-going vessels.

A spokesman for the Transport and Logistics Bureau today (May 22) said, "In line with the goal of digitalisation of government services and the trend of digitalisation in the maritime and shipping sector, we introduce legislative amendments to provide greater convenience to shipowners and vessel operators when applying for and obtaining relevant certificates and documents. This will further enhance the efficiency of marine services and contribute to the image and status of Hong Kong as an international maritime centre."

The Panel on Economic Development of the Legislative Council (LegCo), the Local Vessels Advisory Committee and the Port Operations Committee of the Marine Department have been consulted. Members supported the proposal.

The Bill will be introduced into the LegCo on June 5.

---

## [LCQ22: Introduction of electric public transport modes](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

For the sake of attaining the goal of zero vehicular emissions before 2050, the Government has launched a number of measures in recent years to promote trials of various public transport modes and commercial vehicles running on electricity, and has set the target of introducing about 700 electric buses and around 3 000 electric taxis by the end of 2027. The

relevant sectors have expressed concern whether the Government will roll out more measures to encourage their introduction of more electric public transport modes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the target was set to subsidise about 40 electric public light buses (e-PLBs) for trials for about 12 months in 2023 when the authorities planned to launch the Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses (the Pilot Scheme), but in the end only four applications from PLB operators have been received under the Pilot Scheme and two operators have been subsidised, with each of them purchasing one e-PLB, whether the authorities have examined the reasons why the Pilot Scheme has failed to meet its target;

(2) of the time when the authorities will launch the next round for applications under the Pilot Scheme; whether consideration will be given to raising the proportion of the subsidy level to the purchase price of e-PLBs and raising the cap on the number of subsidised e-PLBs to be acquired by PLB operators;

(3) of the progress made by the authorities in installing quick charging facilities at Yuen Long Station (North) Public Transport Interchange (PTI) and identifying a suitable PTI in the eastern part of Hong Kong Island for installation of such facilities;

(4) given that the New Energy Transport Fund includes trial projects on e-taxi charging mode, which subsidise the trade to set up dedicated e-taxi quick charging facilities and mobile charging systems, of the respective numbers of applications from the taxi trade which have been received and approved by the authorities since the launch of those projects;

(5) of the latest number of electric franchised buses first registered in Hong Kong, and whether the Government has assessed if its target of introducing about 700 electric buses by the end of 2027 can be achieved ahead of schedule; and

(6) as the Government has announced in the 2023 Policy Address that it will formulate a citywide green transformation roadmap and timetable for public buses and taxis in the first half of 2024, of the time when the Government will release the said roadmap and timetable?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

(1) The primary purpose of the Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses (the Pilot Scheme) launched by the Government is to test different models of electric public light buses (e-PLBs), evaluate the feasibility of their application in Hong Kong and the relevant charging facilities' operation and performance, as well as conduct operational trials in different PLB routes.

The Government provides economic incentives to encourage green minibus operators (operators) to participate in the Pilot Scheme. Operators who have succeeded in their applications are provided with a subsidy equal to 80 per cent of the vehicle cost for each e-PLB participating in the Pilot Scheme. The first round of the Pilot Scheme accepted applications from October 27 2023 to November 17 2023, and received a total of four applications from two operators who respectively applied for one and three e-PLBs of the THOR model provided by the supplier Green Mobility Innovations Limited. After vetting in accordance with the application rules, the Government entered into agreements with these two operators to subsidise each of them the purchase of an e-PLB to participate in the trial. The two e-PLBs have started operational trial since late March 2024.

To our understanding, the main reason for the operators not actively participating in the first round of the Pilot Scheme is due to the challenging business environment in operating green minibuses in recent years. Many operators have adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and need to observe and understand more about the actual operation and performance of e-PLBs and the associated charging facilities before making a decision.

(2) and (3) The vehicle costs of the three models of e-PLBs made available to operators for selection in the first round application range from \$1.38 million to \$2 million. The Government will provide operators who have succeeded in their applications with a subsidy equal to 80 per cent of the vehicle cost for each e-PLB participating in the Pilot Scheme. Operators will only need to pay 20 per cent of the vehicle cost (i.e. \$280,000 to \$400,000), which is already much lower than the current vehicle cost (around \$700,000) of a new diesel PLB. Therefore, the current subsidy level is already very attractive to operators. The Government has no plan to further increase the subsidy level.

The Environmental Protection Department adopted the Kwun Tong Yue Man Square and Kowloon Tong (Suffolk Road) Public Transport Interchanges (PTIs) as the initial trial points for installing quick charge facilities. The Government is currently reviewing the detailed arrangements of the first round of the Pilot Scheme and considering optimising the Pilot Scheme with reference to the feedback from operators so as to enhance the attractiveness of the Pilot Scheme and encourage more operators to participate. The Government will finalise the relevant optimised arrangements as soon as possible, and announce in due course the second round Pilot Scheme as well as the plan to install quick charge facilities in other PTIs.

(4) We are working on the funding and implementation details of the trial projects on electric taxi charging mode. We target to invite applications by mid-2024.

(5) Currently, the cost of electric buses is still higher than that of diesel buses. The Government is discussing with the franchised bus companies to understand their actual needs and views, including relevant information such as the bus replacement schedule, so as to tie in with our target of introducing about 700 electric buses by end-2027. According to the

information provided by the Transport Department, as at end-April 2024, there are 90 electric franchised buses, including hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, registered in Hong Kong.

(6) The green transformation of public buses and taxis across the territory is a complex process. On one hand, it involves a considerable number of vehicles and the trade must be given sufficient time for budgeting and technical preparation; on the other hand, we must ensure that there are sufficient suitable vehicle models available for application in Hong Kong at reasonable prices, as well as adequate charging facilities to support the implementation of the transformation. Furthermore, we shall avoid disruptions to the daily commuting of the general public during the process of transformation. Therefore, a smooth transition would hinge on the co-operation of the trade and the development of relevant technologies.

As for the green transformation roadmap and timetable for public buses and taxis, the Government is engaging in detailed discussions with stakeholders, including the taxi trade, franchised bus companies and public vehicle importers, to understand their actual needs and views. This is to ensure that the green transformation of public buses and taxis across the territory can be completed in an orderly manner on the condition that relevant transport services will not be affected. We will finalise a practicable proposal as soon as possible, and target to announce a roadmap and timetable within this year.