

Index Page

Replies to initial written questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-26

Judiciary Administrator

Session No. : 2

JA-1-e1.docx

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
JA001	3176	CHOW Ho-ding, Holden	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA002	3177	CHOW Ho-ding, Holden	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA003	3178	CHOW Ho-ding, Holden	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA004	3179	CHOW Ho-ding, Holden	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA005	3180	CHOW Ho-ding, Holden	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA006	2946	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA007	2947	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA008	2948	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA009	2949	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA010	3838	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA011	3839	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA012	3084	KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA013	1681	KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA014	1683	KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA015	1684	KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA016	1685	KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA017	0600	LAI Tung-kwok	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA018	1563	LAM San-keung	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA019	1564	LAM San-keung	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA020	1565	LAM San-keung	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA021	1566	LAM San-keung	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
JA022	0293	LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA023	2101	LEUNG Hei, Edward	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA024	3023	LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA025	3043	LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA026	3525	LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA027	0241	NG Wing-ka, Jimmy	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA028	2767	QUAT Elizabeth	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA029	2645	TIK Chi-yuen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA030	3749	TIK Chi-yuen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
JA031	1493	YUNG Hoi-yan	80	(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation
JA032	1503	YUNG Hoi-yan	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the
Estimates of Expenditure 2025-26**

**Judiciary Administrator
Session No. : 2
JA-2S-e1.docx**

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-JA001	S013	CHAN Man-ki, Maggie	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions
S-JA002	S011	KAN Wai-mun, Carmen	80	(1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA001

(Question Serial No. 3176)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

1. In response to the average waiting times remaining long across various levels of court, including appeal hearings at the Court of Final Appeal, criminal hearings at the High Court, magistracy appeal hearings, and hearings at the Labour Tribunal and the Small Claims Tribunal, the Judiciary has indicated that a series of measures has been adopted to cope with the situation. These include engaging additional permanent and temporary judicial manpower, strengthening case management, arranging longer court sitting hours, using alternative means of disposal or dispute resolution where appropriate, making greater use of technology, and enhancing court facilities. In this connection, will the Judiciary provide the following information: please state, by levels of court, the aforementioned measures that have been adopted, their implementation, and whether it is anticipated that the situation will return to normal in 2025 and the established target average waiting times will be met?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

The Judiciary has undertaken ongoing and proactive efforts to expedite court proceedings through a series of multi-pronged measures as set out below while steadfastly upholding the principles of justice. These measures have been adopted at different levels of court and tribunals as appropriate –

(a) Engaging additional judicial manpower

To address the persistent shortfall in judicial manpower, the Judiciary conducted more frequent open recruitment exercises for appointing additional Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) for different levels of courts and actively promoted judicial careers to legal professionals. The recruitment efforts in 2024 yielded positive results, with appointments of seven Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (CFI) and nine District Judges

made. More judicial appointments will be made upon the completion of the open recruitment exercise for permanent magistrates.

Continual efforts are also being made to engage temporary judicial manpower including recorders and deputy JJOs from the legal profession at different levels of courts. On average, around 40 temporary/deputy JJOs (including recorders) sit in different levels of courts at any one time.

To expedite the disposal of non-refoulement claims related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which eligible private practitioners from the legal sector are appointed as Deputy Judges of the CFI (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims. Three short-term appointments have been made so far and more appointments are expected to be made in due course. In addition, more judicial associates for supporting JJOs are planned to be engaged to provide relief to the tight judicial resources.

(b) Strengthening case management

More pro-active case management efforts have been made at different court levels in handling both civil and criminal proceedings. These include fixing practicable timetables upon taking into account the circumstances of the cases and keeping the situation under close review, setting out more clearly steps for parties and encouraging them to cooperate in ongoing legal proceedings, dealing with case management issues as early as practicable in case management conferences or pre-trial reviews, and, where practicable, only acceding to requests to accommodate the diaries of legal representatives where it is reasonable and will not cause undue delay to the disposal of the case etc.

With the implementation of relevant Practice Directions in 2022 to ensure timely handing down of reserved judgments for the High Court (HC), the District Court (DC), the Family Court (FC) and the Lands Tribunal (LandsT), the majority of the judgments at various levels of court were handed down within the stipulated timeframes.

(c) Promoting use of mediation in court proceedings

The Judiciary has been making continual efforts in promoting the wider use of mediation at different levels of court to facilitate resolution of disputes for court cases including civil cases in the HC and the DC, family and matrimonial cases in the FC, small claims related cases in Small Claims Tribunal (SCT) as well as building management cases in LandsT. In 2024, the three Mediation Offices set up in the Judiciary have arranged over 900 information sessions and around 1 500 parties/litigants visited the Mediation Offices. Full or partial agreements were reached in over half of the mediated cases referred by the Judiciary.

(d) Greater use of technology

The Judiciary has been making greater use of technology to enhance the efficiency of court business. These initiatives include the development and launching of an integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) by phases across various levels of courts for handling court-related documents and payments electronically, promoting the wider use of remote hearings, facilitating the conduct of e-hearings at the HC and Court of Final Appeal (CFA)

as well as the DC as appropriate, promoting the greater use of special e-mail accounts and e-lodgement platform for submission of documents electronically upon court directions at various court levels etc.

The iCMS has been implemented in the DC, the Magistrates' Courts and SCT from 2022 to 2024 and will be rolled out at other levels of court incrementally in the coming years. While more than 2 100 remote hearings (including video-conferencing or phone hearings) have been conducted so far, the Courts (Remote Hearing) Bill has come into effect on 28 March 2025 to provide a clear legal basis for JJOs to order remote hearing at various levels of courts and tribunals where appropriate, having regard to all relevant factors, as well as the dual requirements of open justice and fair hearing.

The Judiciary is also actively exploring the use of Voice-to-Text technology (VTT) (an artificial intelligence technology). It aims at streamlining the note-taking process for JJOs during hearings, thereby enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the HC Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress. It is expected that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the CFA Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025.

(e) Enhancing court facilities

A total of 13 new courtrooms and associated facilities in the HC Building, Wanchai Tower and Revenue Tower have been commissioned. The mega courtroom in the Wanchai Tower commissioned since August 2023 onwards has been listed for a number of criminal cases involving multiple defendants and/or hearings requiring more advance technological infrastructure.

With the above measures and concerted efforts of all JJOs and support staff, the Judiciary managed to handle an overall caseload in 2024 (including a number of complex cases requiring longer processing times) comparable to that in 2023 and 2019, prior to the pandemic. In overall terms, the target average court waiting times for the majority of civil cases across different levels of court were generally met. There were also considerable improvements in the average waiting times for most criminal proceedings, except for certain types of criminal cases in the CFI, where long trials of complex cases were heard. With the majority of the remaining cases related to 2019 anti-extradition amendment bill incidents and national security being set down for trial in 2025, gradual and more substantial improvements to the court waiting times are anticipated in the years ahead.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA002

(Question Serial No. 3177)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

1. The Judiciary has indicated that the average waiting time for charge cases for the Juvenile Court in 2023 and 2024 failed to meet the target due to factors which are not fully under the control of the court. These include the need to accommodate counsel's and witnesses' diaries and requests from parties for more time to prepare for the cases. In this regard, has the court explored the possibilities of introducing measures or redeploying resources to proactively steer both parties to put the interests of the defendants first, with a view to avoiding or minimising such undesirable situations?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

The average waiting time for charge cases in the Juvenile Court counts from plea to the first date of trial. While ensuring that the administration of justice will not be unduly compromised, the court has all along been taking pro-active case management efforts in fixing practicable timetables upon taking into account the circumstances of the cases and keeping the situation under close review. As the average waiting time for charge cases for the Juvenile Court has fallen slightly short of the target, a robust case management approach will be adopted by the Juvenile Court under which any request to accommodate the diaries of legal representatives and witnesses will only be acceded to where it is reasonable and will not occasion undue delay in the disposal of the case.

The court will continue to closely monitor the situation and endeavour to fix the earliest available date for trial having regard to relevant circumstances and merits of individual case with a view to safeguarding the rights and interests of all parties.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA003

(Question Serial No. 3178)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

1. Regarding "Reporting and Transcription", please provide the following details: Have technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) been adopted in any way in reporting and transcription in court? If so, please provide figures by levels of court, case types, etc. detailing their implementation and the costs saved in transcription as a result; will the Judiciary evaluate the effectiveness of technology in enhancing accuracy, speed and efficiency of reporting? In addition, is there any specialised training provided to staff using the technologies and what is the expenditure?
2. In respect of making further use of AI technology in reporting and transcription in court, what kind of planning and development will the Judiciary have and what resources will be allocated in the future?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The Judiciary has been actively exploring the use of voice-to-text (VTT) technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings in the past two years. We have been developing our own VTT system using VTT software products in the market with a view to enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Following rounds of model training for over ten months using the audio recordings of court hearings and pieces of legislation/ordinances as well as pilot runs in real court cases with the participation of Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs), the accuracy rates of our VTT system have gradually been improved from around 60% initially to around 80%. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the High Court (HC) Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary is planning to deploy the use of VTT-generated texts for facilitating transcript production in an incremental manner. Given that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025, we will be launching a pilot arrangement of producing transcripts using texts generated by the Judiciary's VTT system for selected court hearings in the CFA Building and HC Building by including the relevant requirements in the new contracts for the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services from November 2025. We will continue to keep abreast of developments of the VTT technology (including different AI engines behind such technology) and explore new modes of operation with a view to enhancing the overall efficiency of transcription work.

The Judiciary has been arranging in-house briefing and training sessions for JJOs and support staff on the use of the Judiciary's VTT system for note-taking purpose. As the organisation of training for JJOs and support staff is part and parcel of the duties of in-house staff responsible for the development and management of technology initiatives of the Judiciary Administration, there is no breakdown on the expenditure incurred in the organisation of such training activities. The relevant expenditure is included in the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's Information and Communications Technology initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26. Within this estimated expenditure provision, around \$8 million is estimated to be required for installation of information technology or audio-visual facilities and support equipment, and carrying out related services in courtrooms and chambers for the dedicated support on the use of the Judiciary's VTT system.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA004

(Question Serial No. 3179)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Regarding "Interpretation and Translation", please provide the following details:

1. Please provide information on the latest development on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in any way in interpretation and translation in court. Please provide figures by levels of court, case types, etc. detailing its implementation, the costs saved and the convenience brought about to court as a result (e.g. listing of hearings does not have to be affected due to a lack of suitable translators, among others); will the Judiciary evaluate the effectiveness of technology in enhancing accuracy, speed and efficiency of interpretation and translation? Is there any specialised training provided to staff using the technology and what is the expenditure?
2. In respect of making further use of AI technology in interpretation and translation in court, what planning and development will the Judiciary undertake and what resources will be allocated in the future?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

The Judiciary is committed to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court operations. We have been proceeding at full steam with the implementation of a series of major technology initiatives. These include actively exploring and making use of voice-to-text technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings during the past two years.

In July 2024, the Judiciary has promulgated its first set of guidelines on the use of generative AI for the Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff, which has also been uploaded onto the Judiciary website (https://www.judiciary.hk/doc/en/court_services_facilities/guidelines_on_the_use_of_generative_ai.pdf). The guidelines have been drawn up with reference to similar guidelines issued by courts in other jurisdictions, including England, New

Zealand, Canada and the Mainland. In gist, JJOs and support staff may make prudent and responsible use of generative AI in the course of their work where appropriate. As set out in the guidelines, until and unless there is a generative AI model with proven ability to protect confidential, restricted and private information and adequate built-in checking and verification mechanism to ensure accuracy and reliability, the Judiciary does not recommend the use of generative AI for legal analysis (including judgment writing). On the other hand, generative AI may potentially be useful in tasks such as summarising information, speech/presentation writing, legal translation and administrative tasks (e.g. drafting e-mails/memoranda/letters) where necessary and appropriate. The guidelines are subject to further review and revision to keep abreast of development in generative AI technology and experience in other courts.

As regards court interpretation and translation services for court proceedings, it is imperative to ensure their absolute precision and accuracy in order not to compromise the administration of justice. Currently, court interpretation and translation services for court proceedings are being provided by Court Interpreters of the Judiciary at different levels of court without relying on AI.

In light of the potential of integrating AI technology into interpretation and translation work, the Judiciary has been and will continue to be exploring the suitability of different AI translation tools with a view to making prudent use of them in enhancing the efficiency of translation of court documents and non-judicial documents having regard to the guiding principles set out in the above AI guidelines. We will put in place appropriate training required as and when certain reliable translation tools have been identified for regular use.

The required resources will be deployed from within the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's Information and Communications Technology initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA005

(Question Serial No. 3180)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

For the purpose of assessing the Judiciary's estimated expenditures on technologies, please provide information on the following aspects respectively:

1. The equipment or projects that require the use of artificial intelligence, including but not limited to their titles, descriptions of functions and expected benefits.
2. The recurrent expenditure on such equipment or projects, including expenses regularly incurred in their daily maintenance, software updates and operating management, etc.
3. The various non-recurrent expenditures on such equipment or projects.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

The Judiciary is committed to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court operations. We have been proceeding at full steam with the implementation of a series of major technology initiatives. These include actively exploring the use of voice-to-text (VTT) technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings in the past two years.

We have been developing our own VTT system using VTT software products in the market with a view to enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Following rounds of model training for over ten months using the audio recordings of court hearings and pieces of legislation/ordinances as well as pilot runs in real court cases with the participation of Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs), the accuracy rates of our VTT system have gradually been improved from around 60% initially to around 80%. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the High Court (HC) Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law

Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary is planning to deploy the use of VTT-generated texts for facilitating transcript production in an incremental manner. Given that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025, we will be launching a pilot arrangement of producing transcripts using texts generated by the Judiciary's VTT system for selected court hearings in the CFA Building and HC Building by including the relevant requirements in the new contracts for the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services from November 2025. We will continue to keep abreast of developments of the VTT technology (including different AI engines behind such technology) and explore new modes of operation with a view to enhancing the overall efficiency of transcription work.

The relevant expenditure is included in the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26. Within this estimated expenditure provision, around \$8 million is estimated to be required for installation of information technology or audio-visual facilities and support equipment, and carrying out related services in courtrooms and chambers for the dedicated support on the use of the Judiciary's VTT system.

Separately, in July 2024, the Judiciary has promulgated its first set of guidelines on the use of generative AI for the JJOs and support staff, which has also been uploaded onto the Judiciary website (https://www.judiciary.hk/doc/en/court_services_facilities/guidelines_on_the_use_of_generative_ai.pdf). The guidelines have been drawn up with reference to similar guidelines issued by courts in other jurisdictions, including England, New Zealand, Canada and the Mainland. In gist, JJOs and support staff may make prudent and responsible use of generative AI in the course of their work where appropriate. As set out in the guidelines, until and unless there is a generative AI model with proven ability to protect confidential, restricted and private information and adequate built-in checking and verification mechanism to ensure accuracy and reliability, the Judiciary does not recommend the use of generative AI for legal analysis (including judgment writing). On the other hand, generative AI may potentially be useful in tasks such as summarising information, speech/presentation writing, legal translation and administrative tasks (e.g. drafting e-mails/memoranda/letters) where necessary and appropriate. The guidelines are subject to further review and revision to keep abreast of development in generative AI technology and experience in other courts.

Apart from VTT, the Judiciary intends to explore and participate in other pilot AI projects (such as HKChat) promulgated by the Digital Policy Office where appropriate. The required resources will be deployed from within the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's ICT initiatives of around \$310 million as set out above.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA006

(Question Serial No. 2946)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

With respect to the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), please provide this Council with the following information:

- (1) The situation and trend of law firms registering for the iCMS in the past 5 years (2020-2024);
- (2) The Judiciary's promotion efforts directed to law firms;
- (3) The difficulties the Judiciary encountered in promoting the iCMS and the solutions.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

- (1) The Judiciary is steaming ahead with the implementation of the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), the major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan. It aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. The iCMS is being implemented by phases –
 - (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and
 - (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal, the High Court and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

As at 28 February 2025, a total of 562 court users (including 441 law firms, representing about 48% of law firms registered with the Law Society of Hong Kong) have registered for accounts under the iCMS. Since its implementation in May 2022, the numbers of law firms registered for the iCMS in the past three years are tabulated below:

	As at 28 February 2023	As at 29 February 2024	As at 28 February 2025
Number of law firms registered for the iCMS	56	333	441

The take-up rate is expected to rise progressively following the continued promotion of the iCMS and substantially upon the imposition of mandatory use by all legally represented litigants as from 2026.

- (2) & (3) To incentivise registration under the iCMS during the initial years, court users are offered a fee concession of 20% for five years and three years for case types implemented under the first and second phases respectively, on fee items related to the electronic handling of court documents. Besides, the Judiciary has been implementing a series of promotion and facilitation measures to raise the awareness of the iCMS and help potential users familiarise with handling court businesses in the electronic mode, as set out below –
- (i) providing information on the e-services offered by the iCMS on a dedicated webpage, which was launched in April 2022 and updated from time to time;
 - (ii) operating an iCMS Help Centre and enquiry/technical hotlines to provide law firms and litigants-in-person with advice and assistance on the registration and use of electronic litigation services under the iCMS gratis;
 - (iii) conducting briefings and demonstration sessions as from 2022. A total of 62 briefing-cum-hands-on demonstration sessions for law firms were conducted from January 2023 to February 2025 with the assistance of the Law Society of Hong Kong. Around 800 representatives from some 360 law firms participated in the sessions, and all the sessions were well received;
 - (iv) inviting key external stakeholders (including government departments, public organisations, legal professional bodies and law firms) to take part in pilot runs so as to familiarise with the electronic workflow and the iCMS functions before rolling out the iCMS external functions of relevant case types of different court levels;
 - (v) introducing Deposit Account as an additional electronic payment option for the iCMS Organisation Account users in mid-2025 so that a legal firm can make non-interest bearing prepayments (and subsequent top-ups as required) at or above a specified minimum amount for settling all subsequent payments for

transactions under the iCMS without the hassle of paying for each individual transaction; and

- (vi) organising in conjunction with the Law Society of Hong Kong a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) briefing session for members of the legal professional body in October 2024 for a walkthrough on key iCMS external functions (including registration, electronic filing, electronic inspection and electronic payment functions). CPD points are awarded to a total of about 500 attendees joining the face-to-face briefing session or via webinar.

To prepare for the mandatory requirement for use of the iCMS on the legal profession, we are planning to put in place a new measure to induce migration to the electronic mode upon the extension of the iCMS external functions to selected case types of the High Court in mid-2025. The Judiciary will stipulate in the Practice Direction that a party who files or submits a document in the conventional mode is required to provide the Court with an electronic copy of the document in USB mass storage device or portable hard disk with USB interface at the same time of filing or submission at the court registry. This new arrangement is expected to incentivise law firms to switch from the conventional mode to the iCMS as soon as possible for enjoying the convenience of conducting e-filing anytime and anywhere. We will also continue our utmost efforts in promoting the registration and usage of the iCMS with a view to encouraging migration to the electronic mode.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA007

(Question Serial No. 2947)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

It is stated in "Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26" under Programme (2) that the Judiciary will implement the Information Technology Strategy Plan (ITSP) to provide electronic filing and related services by phases at different levels of court, and make greater use of technology to enhance efficiency of court operations. In this connection, please inform this Council of:

- 1) the staffing establishment and actual expenditure for the implementation of the ITSP in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) (with a breakdown by initiatives);
- 2) the staffing establishment and estimated expenditure for the implementation of the ITSP in 2025-26 (with a breakdown by initiatives);
- 3) the details of the ITSP and its current progress and effectiveness;
- 4) whether the Judiciary has formulated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the ITSP, so that the application of technology can practically enhance efficiency of court operations. If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
- 5) whether the Judiciary has formulated any plans to enhance its voice-to-text system as there are views that it is ineffective. If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
- 6) After the passage of the Courts (Remote Hearing) Bill, what measures will be taken by the Judiciary to expedite the process of digitisation of court operations?

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

(1) to (4)

The Judiciary is steaming ahead with the implementation of the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), the major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan (ITSP). It aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. The iCMS is being implemented by phases –

- (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and
- (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), the High Court (HC) and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

As at 28 February 2025, a total of 562 court users (including 441 law firms, representing about 48% of law firms registered with the Law Society of Hong Kong; all 37 law enforcement agencies; five government departments; 14 organisations; and 65 litigants in person) have registered for accounts under the iCMS. Around 509 000 new cases have been initiated under the iCMS, representing about 65% of the total number of relevant new cases during the period. Separately, court users have filed some 839 000 documents, conducted about 11 000 inspections of documents and made about 24 000 payment transactions via the iCMS. The take-up rate is expected to rise progressively following the continued promotion of the iCMS and substantially upon the imposition of mandatory use by all legally represented litigants as from 2026. For illustration, the percentage of new cases initiated under the iCMS has been increased from about 13% as at 31 January 2023, to about 40% as at 31 January 2024, and then to about 65% as at 28 February 2025.

As the major Key Performance Indicators, the number of registered users of the iCMS and its utilisation in the past three years are tabulated below:

	As at 28 February 2023	As at 29 February 2024	As at 28 February 2025
Number of registered users	102	413	562
Number of new cases initiated under the iCMS	9 300	185 600	509 000
Number of documents filed via the iCMS	3 000	220 500	839 000
Number of inspections of documents conducted via the iCMS	1 900	6 300	11 000
Number of payment transactions made via the iCMS	2 300	13 000	24 000

The Judiciary has been deploying the required manpower and financial resources on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for implementing various initiatives involving the use of technology which seek to enhance the efficiency in court operations on an on-going basis. In 2025-26, the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of all ICT initiatives is around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary. The average annual increase in the past five years is around 9%. Within this estimated expenditure provision, around \$60 million is estimated to be required for on-going support of the information systems implemented under the ITSP including the maintenance and support of the iCMS.

The estimated salaries and related costs of civil service staff of the Judiciary who will be involved in both the development and implementation of the iCMS (along with all other ICT initiatives) where appropriate in 2025-26 have been included in the above \$310 million relating to ICT within the estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary.

The iCMS is an on-going project which is being implemented at different court levels by phases. Within the funding commitment of around \$680 million for the ITSP, the expenditure incurred on the development of the iCMS, which includes the procurement of hardware, software and implementation services (covering IT professionals engaged on contract) in the past five years and the coming year are:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (estimate)
Expenditure (\$ million)	19.4	31.9	49.6	73.5	82.4	39.8

- (5) The Judiciary has been actively exploring the use of voice-to-text (VTT) technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings in the past two years. We have been developing our own VTT system using VTT software products in the market with a view to enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Following rounds of model training for over ten months using the audio recordings of court hearings and pieces of legislation/ordinances as well as pilot runs in real court cases with the participation of Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs), the accuracy rates of our VTT system have gradually been improved from around 60% initially to around 80%. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The feedback from JJOs has so far been positive. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the HC Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary is planning to deploy the use of VTT-generated texts for facilitating transcript production in an incremental manner. Given that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the CFA Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025, we will be launching a pilot arrangement of producing transcripts using texts generated by the Judiciary's VTT system for selected court hearings in the CFA Building and HC Building by including the relevant requirements in the new contracts for the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services from

November 2025. We will continue to keep abreast of developments of the VTT technology (including different AI engines behind such technology) and explore new modes of operation with a view to enhancing the overall efficiency of transcription work.

- (6) In line with the Judiciary's commitment to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court business, the Judiciary has been taking forward and promoting the use of remote hearing on an incremental basis from 2020.

The Courts (Remote Hearing) Ordinance has come into operation on 28 March 2025. It provides a clear legal basis for JJOs to order remote hearing at various levels of courts and tribunals where appropriate, having regard to all relevant factors, as well as the dual requirements of open justice and fair hearing. Specifically, it removes legal impediments to the general application of remote hearing to criminal proceedings and provides express provisions setting out how matters should be handled when a hearing is conducted remotely.

More than 2 100 remote hearings were conducted mostly on civil proceedings at various levels of court as from February 2020 to February 2025 and the experience has so far been positive. As part of the Judiciary's on-going efforts to make wider use of technology in court operations both for enhancing efficiency and access to justice for court users, the Judiciary will endeavour to conduct remote hearings more often where circumstances allow without compromising on the interests of justice, in accordance with the above Ordinance.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA008

(Question Serial No. 2948)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Regarding judicial reviews, please inform this Council of:

- 1) the number of applications for leave to judicial review, the number of judicial reviews, the number of appeals against judicial review decisions, the administrative departments involved, the subject matters of the cases, and their average waiting times (with separate figures for non-refoulement claims) in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) in tabulated form;
- 2) in furtherance of the above question, the number of judicial review cases that were granted legal aid, the outcomes of these judicial reviews, the paying parties of costs and the amounts (with separate figures for non-refoulement claims) in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) in tabulated form;
- 3) the court manpower, ranks of judicial officers and expenditure involved in handling judicial review cases related to non-refoulement claims in the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25) in tabulated form; and
- 4) the anticipated effectiveness of the recent appointment of the first deputy judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court designated to handle non-refoulement claims; the number of such deputy judges to be appointed with a view to expediting the handling of the backlog of non-refoulement claims.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

The statistics maintained by the Judiciary that are relevant to the question for the past five years from 2020 to 2024 are as follows:

Judicial Review Cases	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>Court of First Instance of the High Court</i>					
(a) No. of leave applications filed	2 500	1 767	1 545	2 191	2 549
(b) No. of leave applications filed relating to non-refoulement claims	2 365	1 673	1 445	2 087	2 418
(c) Average waiting time from listing to hearing of leave application ¹	44 days	24 days	26 days	31 days	33 days
(d) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed	41	47	77	43	49
(e) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed relating to non-refoulement claims	31	34	64	35	32
(f) Average waiting time from listing to hearing of substantive judicial review case ¹	78 days	98 days	88 days	76 days	85 days
<i>Court of Appeal of the High Court</i>					
(g) No. of appeals against refusal of leave filed	450	380	297	264	338
(h) No. of appeals against refusal of leave filed relating to non-refoulement claims	413	350	279	246	314
(i) Average waiting time from listing to appeal hearing in respect of refusal of leave application ¹	58 days	58 days	53 days	43 days	55 days
(j) No. of appeals against judicial review decisions filed	12	8	11	1	6
(k) No. of appeals against judicial review decisions filed relating to non-refoulement claims	1	1	6	0	0
(l) Average waiting time from listing to appeal hearing ¹	75 days	119 days	99 days	81 days	50 days
<i>Court of Final Appeal</i>					
(m) No. of applications for leave to appeal (civil) filed ²	289	564	670	352	186
(n) No. of applications for leave to appeal (civil) filed relating to non-refoulement claims	252	510	603	307	147
(o) No. of substantive appeals (civil) filed ²	11	6	14	10	12
(p) No. of substantive appeals (civil) filed relating to non-refoulement claims	0	0	0	0	0

Remarks:

¹ Separate average waiting time is not available for non-refoulement claim cases.

² The figures are total number of cases filed to the Court of Final Appeal which include non-judicial review cases.

³ The relevant statistics are live data which are subject to change depending on the date and time of preparation of the statistical information.

The Judiciary does not maintain the other requested statistics on judicial review cases.

The expenditure on handling legal proceedings relating to non-refoulement claims forms part of the general operating expenses of the Judiciary. The Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its resources for handling such cases at different levels of court having regard to operational needs. The relevant expenditure includes the salary and related expenses as well as other operating expenses of judges and supporting staff in the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal who are handling these cases alongside all other cases on a rotational or day-to-day basis ^{Note}. The Judiciary does not maintain the breakdown of operating expenses incurred exclusively for coping with cases relating to non-refoulement claims.

The Judiciary has also been engaging Deputy Judges in the Court of First Instance of the High Court and contract supporting staff to assist in handling non-refoulement claim related cases. Currently, six retired judges have been appointed as Deputy Judges to assist in handling these cases. The additional expenditure in the past five years for such extra manpower is as follows:

2020-21 (\$ million)	2021-22 (\$ million)	2022-23 (\$ million)	2023-24 (\$ million)	2024-25 (\$ million)
6.5	13.3	10.0	10.1	14.2

Note: The breakdown of expenditure of judges in the Court of Appeal of the High Court and Court of Final Appeal is not available as the number of appeal cases listed for their disposal in a year hinges on multiple varying factors.

To further expedite the disposal of backlog and incoming non-refoulement claim related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which eligible private practitioners from the legal sector are appointed as Deputy Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims. The Judiciary is initially planning to appoint around ten such special Deputy Judges, each for a specified period of time. Three short-term appointments have been made so far and more appointments are expected to be made in due course. The estimated expenditure for engaging these Deputy Judges under the special scheme in 2025-26 is \$4.0 million.

Furthermore, the administrative procedures and presentation of the judgment/decision notice have been suitably streamlined so as to expedite the processing of cases by judges. The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the progress and flexibly deploy resources in response to operational needs, with a view to enhancing the efficiency in handling non-refoulement claim related cases as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA009

(Question Serial No. 2949)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

- 1) Please provide information on the size of establishment, posts, ranks, vacancies, salaries and allowances respectively of the Lands Tribunal, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal, the Obscene Articles Tribunal and the Coroner's Court for the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25);
- 2) Please provide information on the salaries and benefits of the Magistrates' Courts, the District Court, the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal of the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal (including permanent and non-permanent judges) for the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25);
- 3) There have been views that the supply of judges at lower ranks is relatively sufficient and thus it is necessary to review the practice of across-the-board salary adjustments. Will the Judiciary incorporate "supply and demand" as well as the remuneration of legal professionals with comparable qualifications in the market into the judicial service pay adjustment mechanism as factors for consideration? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 33)

Reply:

(1) The establishment, number of posts and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff of the Lands Tribunal, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal, the Obscene Articles Tribunal and the Coroner's Court, for the past five years (i.e. 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) are as follows:

Tribunal/ Court	Establish- ment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision* (\$ million)				
			2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Lands Tribunal	31	3 – District Judge	23.4	23.4	23.9	24.9	25.6
		2 – Member					
		8 – Judicial Clerk Grade Staff					
		17 – Clerical Staff					
		1 – Office Assistant					
Labour Tribunal	91	1 – Principal Presiding Officer	58.5	57.4	58.8	61.3	63.0
		8 – Presiding Officer					
		14 – Judicial Clerk grade staff [@]					
		15 – Tribunal Officer [@]					
		42 – Clerical staff ^{&}					
		5 – Secretarial staff ^{&}					
		2 – Office Assistant [^]					
Small Claims Tribunal	80	4 – Workman II [^]					
		1 – Principal Adjudicator	53.6	53.6	55.0	57.2	58.9
		11 – Adjudicator					
		21 – Judicial Clerk grade staff					
		46 – Clerical staff					
Obscene Articles Tribunal	7	1 – Office Assistant					
		2 – Magistrates	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.9
Coroner's Court	14	5 – Clerical staff					
		3 – Coroner	9.8	9.8	10.1	10.5	10.8
		1 – Judicial Clerk grade staff					
		8 – Clerical staff					
		1 – Secretarial staff					
		1 – Workman II					

* Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible JJOs and civil service support staff.

[@] Including two Judicial Clerk Grade posts regraded from two Tribunal Officer posts in 2021-22 and 2024-25 respectively.

- & Including two Clerical staff posts regraded from two Secretarial staff posts in 2022-23 and 2024-25 respectively.
- ^ Including two Workman II posts regraded from two Office Assistant posts in 2021-22.

The number of vacancies of JJOs and support staff vary at different times of the year as they are affected by changes due to retirement, resignations, promotions and appointments to other grades. In light of vacant judicial posts, deputy JJOs would be engaged to sit in various courts/tribunals to hear cases if needed. As at 1 March 2025, there is no vacancy recorded in the Coroner's Court. As at 1 March 2025, taking into account the deputy JJOs engaged, the vacancies (both JJOs and support staff) in the Lands Tribunal, Labour Tribunal, Small Claims Tribunal and Obscene Articles Tribunal are 3, 6, 9 and 1 respectively. The vacancies will be filled at different junctures through recruitment and promotion procedures as and when appropriate.

- (2) The monthly salary of JJOs at different levels of court for the past five years (i.e. 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) are as follows:

Level of Court	Rank	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Court of Final Appeal	Chief Justice	387,400	387,400	397,100	411,500	423,850
	Permanent Judge [#]	376,600	376,600	386,000	399,950	411,950
Court of Appeal of the High Court	Chief Judge of the High Court	376,600	376,600	386,000	399,950	411,950
	Justice of Appeal	339,550	339,550	348,050	360,650	371,450
Court of First Instance of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance	323,650	323,650	331,750	343,750	354,050
High Court Masters' Office	Registrar	262,450	262,450	269,000	278,750	287,100
	Senior Deputy Registrar	239,300 to 253,900	239,300 to 253,900	245,300 to 260,250	254,200 to 269,650	261,850 to 277,750
	Deputy Registrar	224,250 to 237,750	224,250 to 237,750	229,850 to 243,700	238,150 to 252,500	245,300 to 260,100
District Court (including Family Court and Lands Tribunal)	Chief District Judge	262,450	262,450	269,000	278,750	287,100
	Principal Family Court Judge	239,300 to 253,900	239,300 to 253,900	245,300 to 260,250	254,200 to 269,650	261,850 to 277,750
	District Judge	224,250 to 237,750	224,250 to 237,750	229,850 to 243,700	238,150 to 252,500	245,300 to 260,100
	Member, Lands Tribunal	192,950 to 204,750	192,950 to 204,750	197,750 to 209,850	204,900 to 217,450	211,050 to 223,950
District Court Masters' Office	Registrar	177,700 to 188,400	177,700 to 188,400	182,150 to 193,100	188,750 to 200,100	194,400 to 206,100

Level of Court	Rank	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	Deputy Registrar	162,550 to 172,450	162,550 to 172,450	166,600 to 176,750	172,650 to 183,150	177,850 to 188,650
Magistrates' Courts/ Specialized Court/ Other Tribunals	Chief Magistrate	224,250 to 237,750	224,250 to 237,750	229,850 to 243,700	238,150 to 252,500	245,300 to 260,100
	Principal Magistrate/ Principal Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Principal Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal	177,700 to 188,400	177,700 to 188,400	182,150 to 193,100	188,750 to 200,100	194,400 to 206,100
	Coroner/ Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal	162,550 to 172,450	162,550 to 172,450	166,600 to 176,750	172,650 to 183,150	177,850 to 188,650
	Magistrate	143,885 to 172,450	143,885 to 172,450	147,480 to 176,750	152,820 to 183,150	157,405 to 188,650
	Special Magistrate	93,525 to 110,500	93,525 to 110,500	95,865 to 113,265	99,335 to 117,365	102,315 to 120,885

The Non-Permanent Judges' remuneration is pegged to the monthly salary of a Permanent Judge and is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Apart from salary, the remuneration package of JJOs covers a range of fringe benefits subject to individual JJOs' eligibility. These include (a) Judiciary Quarters or housing allowance; (b) Medical Insurance Allowance; (c) Judicial Dress Allowance; (d) transport service for leave travel; (e) annual leave and other types of leave (e.g. sick leave, maternity/ paternity leave, etc.); (f) medical and dental services provided by the Government or the Hospital Authority; (g) Local Education Allowance; (h) Overseas Education Allowance; (i) School Passage Allowance; (j) Leave Passage Allowance; and (k) pension benefits etc.

- (3) The remuneration package for JJOs is determined by the Chief Executive-in-Council after considering the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service ("Judicial Committee"), an independent advisory body set up to advise and make recommendations on the salary and conditions of service of JJOs.

The judicial remuneration review mechanism comprises an annual review and a benchmark study conducted by the Judicial Committee on a regular basis. The benchmark study seeks to ascertain the levels of earnings of legal practitioners in private practice in comparison with the salary of JJOs at corresponding levels.

The advice and recommendations tendered by the Judicial Committee on judicial remuneration takes into account the basket of factors approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council in May 2008, as well as the principle of judicial independence, the position of the Judiciary and the findings of the benchmark study in the year applicable. The basket of factors include, inter alia, (i) the responsibility, working conditions and workload of judges vis-à-vis those of lawyers in private practice; (ii) recruitment and retention in the Judiciary; (iii) private sector pay levels and trends, etc. The supply of and demand for legal services in the private market rendered by registered legal practitioners have a bearing on the level of their earnings, and thus would be reflected, albeit indirectly, in the findings of the benchmark study.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3838)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

- 1) Please provide the detailed listing of the names of the Judges who have been elevated and who have retired (including their ranks before elevation/retirement) over the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25), the names of the newly appointed Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court and their positions (including Deputy Judges and Recorders), and the vacancies yet to be filled; and
- 2) Please provide the listing of the names of non-judicial administrative personnel (including their ranks before elevation/retirement) over the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25), and the vacancies yet to be filled.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 57)

Reply:

(1)

The list of Judges who were appointed from serving Judges or Judicial Officers at other levels of court (internal elevation) and appointed to the Court of First Instance of the High Court (CFI) in the past five years (including their previous positions) from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are set out in Annex A.

The list of Judges who retired from 2020-21 to 2024-25 is set out at Annex B.

Arising from creation of new judicial posts, elevation of Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) from lower to higher levels of court, and natural wastage (mainly due to retirement of JJOs), the number of vacancies vary at different times of the years. As at 31 March 2025, the number of vacancies at the CFI were six. The average vacancy rate in the past five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 is 25%.

The Judiciary has been conducting more frequent open recruitment exercises for filling judicial vacancies in recent years. In the previous round of recruitment exercises for JJOs,

seven CFI Judges were appointed in 2024-25. In November 2024, a new round of open recruitment for CFI Judges was launched and new appointments are anticipated to be made in 2025.

(2)

The Judiciary Administration has a staffing establishment of over 1 800 civil service posts providing an extensive range of administrative support services in ensuring the administration of justice. They mainly include court registries, support to JJOs in court hearings and proceedings, bailiff services, translation and interpretation services, use of technology in courts, mediation services, court and office accommodation, court security, media and publicity, general administration, financial and human resources management etc. Among the civil service posts, about 600 are from judicial grades in the Judiciary, including Judicial Clerks, Court Interpreters, Bailiffs and Bailiff's Assistants and Tribunal Officers; 1 200 are from other grades in the civil service, including Administrative Officers, Executive Officers, Treasury Accountants, Systems Managers, Information Officers, Clerical Officers etc. In view of the large number of staff involved, the frequent staff movements arising from appointment of new recruits, internal redeployments, transfers, resignations and retirement, as well as the privacy concerns about the personal data involved (e.g, the year of appointment, promotion or retirement of individual staff), we are not able to provide the list of non-judicial administrative personnel over the past five years.

The number of vacancies varies at different times of the year as it is affected by changes due to retirement, resignations, promotions and appointments to other civil service grades. As at 1 March 2025, the vacancy rate of the civil service posts in the Judiciary is around 9%. The vacant posts mainly belong to the grades of Judicial Clerk, Court Interpreter, Clerical Officer and Clerical Assistant. To ensure there is adequate manpower at different ranks, open recruitment and promotion exercises for various grades have been arranged all year round. The vacancies will be filled at different junctures when the required recruitment and promotion formalities are completed.

I. List of Judges appointed from serving Judges or Judicial Officers at other levels of court (internal elevation) from 2020-21 to 2024-25

	Name of Judge and rank	Former rank
1.	Chief Justice Andrew CHEUNG, Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal	Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal
2.	Mr Justice Johnson LAM, Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal	Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court
3.	Madam Justice Maggie POON, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court
4.	Mr Justice Godfrey LAM, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court
5.	Mr Justice Anderson CHOW, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court
6.	Madam Justice Anthea PANG, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court
7.	Mr Justice Johnny CHAN, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
8.	Mr Justice Herbert AU-YEUNG, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
9.	Madam Justice Winnie TSUI, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
10.	Mr Justice LEUNG Chun-man, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
11.	Mr Justice Douglas YAU, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge

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|-----|--|----------------------|
| 12. | Mr Justice Anthony KWOK,
Judge of the Court of First Instance of the
High Court | District Judge |
| 13. | Madam Justice Amanda WOODCOCK,
Judge of the Court of First Instance of the
High Court | District Judge |
| 14. | Mr WONG King-wah,
Registrar of the Court of Final Appeal and
Senior Deputy Registrar, High Court | District Judge |
| 15. | Mr HUI Ka-ho,
Senior Deputy Registrar, High Court | District Judge |
| 16. | Judge WONG Sze-lai,
District Judge | Permanent Magistrate |
| 17. | Judge CHEUNG Kit-yea,
District Judge | Permanent Magistrate |
| 18. | Judge Dick HO,
District Judge | Principal Magistrate |
| 19. | Judge Ada YIM,
District Judge | Principal Magistrate |
| 20. | Judge Lawrence YIP,
District Judge | Permanent Magistrate |
| 21. | Judge Michelle LAM,
District Judge | Permanent Magistrate |
| 22. | Judge LEE Siu-ho,
District Judge | Permanent Magistrate |

II. List of Judges appointed to the Court of First Instance of the High Court from 2020-21 to 2024-25

	Name of Judge and rank	Former rank before appointment
1.	Mr Justice Johnny CHAN, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
2.	Madam Justice Anna LAI, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	Senior Counsel
3.	Madam Justice Yvonne CHENG, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	Senior Counsel
4.	Mr Justice Herbert AU-YEUNG, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
5.	Madam Justice Winnie TSUI, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
6.	Mr Justice LEUNG Chun-man, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
7.	Mr Justice Douglas YAU, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
8.	Mr Justice Anthony KWOK, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
9.	Madam Justice Amanda WOODCOCK, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	District Judge
10.	Mr Justice TAM Yiu-ho, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Department of Justice

List of Judges who retired from 2020-21 to 2024-25

Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal

1. Chief Justice Geoffrey MA

Justices of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court

1. Mr Justice Wally YEUNG
2. Madam Justice Maria Candace YUEN
3. Mr Justice Ian Charles McWALTERS

Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court

1. Mr Justice Mohan Tarachand BHARWANEY
2. Mr Justice Patrick LI
3. Madam Justice Bebe CHU
4. Mr Justice Joseph YAU
5. Mr Justice Albert WONG
6. Mrs Justice Audrey Patricia CAMPBELL-MOFFAT
7. Madam Justice Marlene NG

District Judges

1. Judge Michael WONG
2. Judge Katina LEVY LAW
3. Judge David John DUFTON
4. Judge SHAM Siu-man
5. Judge Katherine LO
6. Judge Roy YU
7. Judge Timothy Harry CASEWELL
8. Judge Reuden LAI
9. Judge PANG Ka-kwong

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA011

(Question Serial No. 3839)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

- 1) Please provide the actual expenditure and the establishment on judicial training activities (including those targeting designated judges under the National Security Law (NSL)) and exchanges with other jurisdictions in the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25), with details of the activities and exchanges as well as the number of participants by category of activities;
- 2) the details of the proposed judicial training activities and exchanges with other jurisdictions, as well as the estimated expenditure and the establishment involved in 2025-26, with a breakdown by category of activities; and
- 3) the Judiciary Administrator's own training in response to court's remote hearing and digitalisation; please set out the judicial training (including the participants, themes, expenditure, etc.) undertaken using internal and external resources in the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25).

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 58)

Reply:

- (1)&(2) The Hong Kong Judicial Institute (JI) is responsible for organizing judicial training for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) (including designated judges) at all levels of court.

The JI is overseen by a Governing Body chaired by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and comprises court leaders at the respective court levels, two experienced judges in the High Court and the Judiciary Administrator. The JI's current executive manpower comprises an Executive Director, three Directors and six Counsel who are legal professionals, as well as four support staff including one Senior Executive Officer, two Assistant Clerical Officers and one Personal Secretary.

The provision for salaries and related expenses for these executive staff members, is included in the general operating expenses of the Judiciary.

The JI's judicial training programme of each year typically comprises induction training for newly appointed JJOs; core courses mainly on specific aspects of the law, court craft, judicial ethics, judgment writing, sentencing, and use of technology for meeting their professional needs and operational needs of the courts; as well as seminars (including Chinese law and legal system in Mainland China) and exchange activities with courts in the Mainland and other common law jurisdictions from time to time. The participation of JJOs varies among the different training activities, depending on the nature of training, the professional and operational needs of JJOs, and their availability as permitted by court diaries. Details of the judicial training activities organized and exchanges with other jurisdictions attended by JJOs in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 which were included in the relevant annual reports of the Judiciary uploaded on the Judiciary's official website are at **Annex**.

The actual expenditure on organizing judicial training/educational activities and exchanges with other jurisdictions (on top of on-going in-house training provided by serving judges in the Judiciary with expenses absorbed within the Judiciary's operating expenditure) for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 are \$0.5 million, \$0.3 million, \$0.7 million, \$1.5 million and \$1.8 million (as at 1 March 2025) respectively. In 2025-26, the Judiciary's estimated expenditure for judicial training/educational activities and visit programmes to other jurisdictions, including the Mainland is \$4.3 million. The increased provision seeks to cope with the estimated increase in expenses for the organization of more judicial training and exchanges in 2025-26.

In 2025-26, the JI will continue to organize core judicial training programmes for meeting JJOs' professional needs and operational needs of the courts. In addition, the Judiciary is planning to enhance judicial training and exchanges with the Mainland and the other jurisdictions as appropriate. These include organizing in Hong Kong a high-level judicial seminar involving Mainland Judges, exchange programmes with Mainland Judges in Hong Kong or the Mainland, exchanges with other common law jurisdictions, as well as those exchange activities initiated by local universities, other organizations and other jurisdictions at different times of the year.

- (3) The Judiciary is committed to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court operations. We have been proceeding at full steam with the implementation of a series of major technology initiatives including the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), remote hearings, live broadcasting of court proceedings outside court premises, use of voice-to-text technology, use of e-bundles at court hearings, e-appointments for specific court services, etc.

The planning, design, and implementation of these technology initiatives have long been undertaken by the Judiciary Administration through deployment of the required manpower and financial resources on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on an on-going basis. Specifically, the Judiciary Administration has been deploying dedicated in-house staff of the Information Technology Office for system

development and implementation of these technology initiatives. Their responsibilities include the organization and provision of training (e.g. briefing and demonstration sessions; hands-on practice) for JJOs, support staff of the Judiciary, and major court users (including the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, relevant government departments such as the Department of Justice and the Hong Kong Police Force, etc.).

For internal users including JJOs and support staff of the Judiciary, there are regular training sessions organized by the Judiciary Administration on various technology initiatives. For JJOs, we have been organizing various judicial training activities, such as training on iCMS for JJOs in various levels of court, briefing on e-hearings, seminar on information technology security, demonstration on generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools, etc. Similarly, we have been organizing training for support staff covering the use of iCMS functions in respect of different levels of court involving the participation of more than 200 staff each year. Training sessions are also conducted on an on-going basis for support staff in respect of the implementation of remote hearings, e-bundle hearings, digital evidence and exhibit handling, and use of voice-to-text technology, etc.

Apart from in-house training provided by the Judiciary Administration, our staff have also been attending on-going technology related training courses organized by the Digital Policy Office, the Civil Service College and other organizations to meet operational needs, such as training on big data analytics, AI-powered public services, etc. to keep updated on evolving government policy/practices on related topics. The Judiciary Administration would also monitor the latest developments of information technology initiatives (e.g. GenAI) around the world through different channels, such as exchanges with courts in other jurisdictions on the use of information technology.

In addition, the Judiciary Administration also organizes regular training for external court users on the objectives and application of different technology initiatives. For example, we organized in conjunction with the Law Society of Hong Kong a Continuing Professional Development briefing session for members of the legal professional body in October 2024 on key iCMS external functions with participation of about 500 attendees. We have separately arranged briefing sessions and pilot runs for government departments and law firms in preparation for the rollout of iCMS external functions.

As the organization of training for JJOs, support staff of the Judiciary, and court users is part and parcel of the duties of in-house staff responsible for the development and management of technology initiatives of the Judiciary Administration, there is no breakdown on the expenditure incurred in the organization of such training activities. The relevant expenditure is included in the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's ICT initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26.

**Judicial Training Activities and Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions
Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2020-21**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
27.4.2020, 20.5.2020, 7.7.2020, 18.8.2020, 5.11.2020, 22.1.2021, 23.2.2021	Induction briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	19
8 – 9.4.2020	Demonstration session on conducting remote hearing using video-conferencing facilities	19
5.5.2020	Training on digital evidence and exhibit handling	1
29 – 30.6.2020	Induction course for newly appointed Permanent Magistrates 2020	14
3.7.2020	Talk entitled “Judicial Impartiality and Public Confidence” by the Hon Mr Justice Albert WONG, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	72
7.8.2020	Training on Integrated Court Case Management System for Magistrates	7
11.9, 16.9 & 25.9.2020	Intervisioning sessions of case management workshop	18
14.9.2020	Competition Law Seminar	12
15.10.2020	Integrated use of courtroom information technology for hearing	8
13.11.2020	Introduction to the Family Court	14
19.11.2020	Training on the integrated use of courtroom IT for e-hearing/ trials	3

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
8.1.2021	Seminar by Occupational Safety and Health Council on Industrial Accidents – Falling from Heights	26
4, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22.1.2021	Training on Integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) for District Judges	17
26.3.2021	Sentencing Workshop for Magistrates	20

(B) Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
23.10.2020	The Chief Justice delivered opening remarks at the session of “Hong Kong and its Role in International Arbitration” of the Alternative Dispute Resolution in Asia Conference: Redesigning International Arbitration	1
27.10.2020	The Chief Justice delivered a speech at the International Academy of Mediators – The Hong Kong Mediation Council Symposium	1
2.11.2020	Attended the Opening of the Hong Kong Legal Week 2020 cum Opening of the Hong Kong Legal Hub and Launch of Vision 2030 for Rule of Law	3
3.11.2020	Attended the Inaugural Rule of Law Congress	1
10.11.2020	Attended the International Bar Association 2020 - Virtually Together Conference	1
23.11.2020	Attended the 1st Belt and Road Webinar titled “Look beyond COVID-19: Connect and Unite through Belt and Road and LawTech” organized by the Law Society of Hong Kong	1
26.11.2020	The Chief Justice delivered a speech at a speaker event of the Oxford Union	1
12.3.2021	Attended the 3rd meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts hosted by the Singapore Supreme Court via video conferencing	2

Remark: Judges and Judicial Officers had not attended local judicial training activities organized by other local organizations for the financial year 2020-21.

**Judicial Training Activities and Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions
Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2021-22**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
21.4, 26.5, 5.8, 31.8, 29.12.2021 & 17.1.2022	Induction Briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	17
24.4.2021	Seminar on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the Basic Law and the National Security Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	151
30.4.2021	Sentencing Workshop for Magistrates	27
19.6.2021	Induction Course for District Judges and Magistrates	16
29.6.2021	Training on e-hearing for District Judges (Civil)	3
30.7.2021	Case Management Sharing Session	25
4.8.2021	Training on e-hearing for PI Judges and Masters	4
9.8 & 27.10.2021	Training on e-hearing for Family Judges	9
26.8.2021	Demonstration on Digital Evidence and Exhibit Handling for Magistrates	6
9.9 & 14.9.2021	Training on e-hearing for District Judges (Criminal)	15
30.9.2021	Training on Legal Research	7
23.10.2021	Seminar on Industrial Accidents – Electrocution	22

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
11.12.2021	Seminar on the Constitutional Role of the National People's Congress and the Development of the Judicial System of the People's Republic of China	153

(B) Other Local Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
9.4.2021	Webinar entitled “Gross Negligence Manslaughter: Should it apply to healthcare practitioners?”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
3.5.2021	Webinar entitled “Foreign Judges on Domestic Courts: Joint Keynote presentation”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	3
31.5.2021	Webinar entitled “Digital Assets in Hong Kong: What are they and how are they taxed”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	3
1.6.2021	Webinar entitled “Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) 1970 Evidence Convention and Remote Taking of Evidence by Video-link”, co-organized by Asian Business Law Institute and Permanent Bureau of the HCCH	1
11.6.2021	Webinar entitled “Conflicting Limitation Periods - A Comparison between Hong Kong and Mainland China”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
15.6.2021	Webinar entitled “Non Fungible Tokens: What's Beyond the Hype?”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
22.6.2021	Webinar entitled “Statutory Adjudication For The Construction Industry - Its Role And Effectiveness In National Dispute Resolution”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	1
2.7.2021	Webinar entitled “Justice, the courts and Covid-19: the need for the judiciary to innovate”, organized by the International Bar Association	2
29.7.2021	Webinar entitled “Overview and Latest Development of Shipping Law in Hong Kong”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
4.10.2021	Webinar entitled “Law on Mental Capacity”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	10
6.10.2021	Webinar entitled “Non-fungible Tokens and Digital Art: what are they and what do you get if you buy one?”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
7.10.2021	Webinar entitled “The Recognition and Enforcement of International Mediated Settlement Agreements”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
8.10.2021	Webinar entitled “New Empirical Study of Typologies of Animal Cruelty in Hong Kong”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
15.10.2021	Webinar entitled “Gross Negligence Manslaughter: Lessons Learnt from <i>HKSAR v Chow Heung Wing, Stephen, Chan Kwun Chung & Mak Wan Ling</i> ”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
26.10.2021	Webinar entitled “A tale of Two Regions: the Dichotomy between Chinese and Hong Kong Data Privacy Regime”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
27.10.2021	Webinar entitled “Artificial Intelligence: Privacy and Ethics”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
28.10.2021	Webinar entitled “Res Judicata in International Arbitration”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	1
17.12.2021	Webinar entitled “Anti-suit Injunctions and FRAND Litigation in China”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
26.1.2022	Webinar entitled “Relational Autonomy: Rethinking Informed Consent in Healthcare from Cross-Cultural and Religious Perspectives”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
22.2.2022	Webinar entitled “Equality”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
24.2.2022	Webinar entitled “Determining the Law of International Arbitration Agreements - New Insight from the UK Supreme Court”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	1
25.2.2022	Webinar entitled “The Asian Principles for the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
9.3.2022	Webinar entitled “The Incursion of Antitrust into China's Platform Economy”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
28.3.2022	Webinar entitled “Understanding Administrative Law in the Common Law World (OUP, 2021) with the author - Paul Daly”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
31.3.2022	Webinar entitled “Effectively Resolving Dispute with Chinese Parties under the CISG”, organized by the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission Hong Kong Arbitration Center	1

(C) Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	No. of Judges and Judicial Officers Participated
18 – 21.5.2021	Visited Beijing and met with the President of the Supreme People's Court	3
31.5.2021	Attended the "Why Use Hong Kong Law" at a webinar jointly organized by the Department of Justice and the Asian Academy of International Law	1
16.6.2021	The Chief Justice spoke at the Hong Kong Association of the United Kingdom webinar	1
23.7.2021	Attended the First Xiamen Cross-Border Insolvency via video conferencing	1
27.7.2021	Attended the Sixth Seminar of Senior Judges of Cross-Strait and Hong Kong and Macao via video conferencing	8
6.9.2021	Members of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Basic Law Committee visited the Judiciary	1
28.9.2021	The Chief Justice delivered a speech at the Third China Judicial Research Summit Forum and Rule of Law Culture and Judicial Practice Seminar via a pre-recorded video	1
26.10.2021	Attended the Maritime Silk Road (Quanzhou) International Forum on Judicial Cooperation organized by the Supreme People's Court via video conferencing	2
1.11.2021	The Chief Justice delivered welcome remarks at the Judicial Conference of the Fourth United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Asia Pacific Judicial Summit 2021	2
2.11.2021	Attended the legal forum organized by the Hong Kong and Mainland Legal Professional Association entitled "Maritime Dispute Resolution in Hong Kong: Current and Future"	1
2.11.2021	Attended the International Criminal Law Conference	1

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	No. of Judges and Judicial Officers Participated
2.11.2021	Attended the Judicial Roundtable of the Fourth UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit 2021	1
5.11.2021	The Chief Justice delivered the opening address at the Rule of Law Signature Engagement Event “SEE – A Journey of Transformation for a Sustainable Future”	1
21.1.2022	Attended the 14th Edition of the Frankfurt Investment Arbitration Moot Court - China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) Chinese (Mainland) National Round via video conferencing	1
15.2.2022	Attended the "New Mechanism for Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement in Matrimonial and Family Cases between the Courts of Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" co-organized by the Supreme People's Court and the Department of Justice	1
24 – 25.2.2022	Attended the 7th Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation via video conferencing	7

**Judicial Training Activities and Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions
Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2022-23**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
6.4, 7.4, 19.5, 31.5, 29.6, 27.7, 30.8, 1.9, 21.9, 9.11, 1.12.2022, 17.1, 19.1, 21.2, 27.2 & 2.3.2023	Induction briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	30
8.4 & 13.4.2022	Demonstration and discussion session on Outside Courtroom Hearings	20
6.5.2022	Training on enhancements to the iCMS for District Court Civil Judges and Masters	Not applicable (Online training materials uploaded for self-learning by JJOs)
25.5.2022	Contempt of Court Briefing Session	53
Jul – Aug 2022	Chinese judgment writing courses	8
3.9.2022	Seminar on the Continuation and Development of the HKSAR's Legal System and the Mutual Legal Assistance Arrangements between the Mainland and the HKSAR	119
3.3 & 4.3.2023	Induction Course for Newly Appointed Permanent Magistrates	11
18.3.2023	Seminar on the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China	144
27.3.2023	Case Settlement Conference Experience Sharing Session	11

(B) Other Local Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
1.4.2022	Webinar entitled “Determining the Appropriate Forum by the Applicable Law”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
12.4.2022	Webinar entitled “Blockchain Asset Registries - Freeing Crypto from Mania”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	2
20.4.2022	Webinar entitled “Enforcement of Intellectual Property and Related Rights from Internet-based Platforms”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1
28.4.2022	Webinar entitled “Hong Kong Competition Law - Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	3
26.5.2022	Webinar entitled “Disputes Under Insurance Contracts”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	1
7.6.2022	Webinar entitled “Private International Law in the Greater Bay Area: An Empirical Assessment of the Qianhai Court Judgments”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
31.8.2022	Webinar entitled “International Cryptocurrency Disputes: Trends and Developments”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	4
19.10.2022	Webinar entitled “Blockchain, NFTs and the Metaverse: Implications for Disputes and the Dispute Resolution Process”, organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators	2
9.11.2022	Webinar entitled “Sustainability, Inequality, and Competition Law”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
23.11.2022	Webinar entitled “All in Crypto”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
25.11.2022	Webinar entitled “Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Bill - Key Provisions and Impact”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	8
5.1.2023	Webinar entitled “Contractual Estoppel: A First Look at First Tower Trustees in Hong Kong”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
1.3.2023	Webinar entitled “The Knights Templar and the Origins of the Common Law of Trusts”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	7
23.3.2023	Webinar entitled “The Application of the CISG in the GBA”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1

(C) Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	No. of Judges and Judicial Officers Participated
14.4.2022	Met with a group of Mainland judges attending the Doctor of Juridical Science Programme or the Master of Law Programme of the City University of Hong Kong through video conferencing	1
23.4.2022	Attended the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Judicial Case Seminar via video conferencing	3
26.5.2022	Attended the Forum on Rule of Law in Digital Economy hosted by the Supreme People's Court via video conferencing	2
20.7.2022	Attended the 3rd China-ASEAN Justice Forum organized by the Supreme People's Court via video conferencing	1
30.8.2022	Attended the Inaugural Meeting of the Chief Justices and Judges in charge of Technology hosted by the Supreme Court of Singapore via video conferencing	2
21.9.2022	Attended the BRICS Justices Forum organized by the Supreme People's Court via video conferencing	1
20 – 21.10.2022	Attended the fourth meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Court in Sydney, Australia	4
11.11.2022	The Chief Justice delivered an opening remarks at the opening ceremony of the Rule of Law Congress: Rule of Law and Justice for All under Hong Kong Legal Week 2022	2
16 – 17.11.2022	Hosted the 18th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific via video conferencing. It was attended by 24 Chief Justices and eight representatives of Chief Justices from jurisdictions throughout Asia and the Pacific region	1
1.12.2022	Attended the education programmes of the International Academy of Family Lawyers (IAFL) Annual Meeting 2022 held in Marrakech, Morocco	1

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	No. of Judges and Judicial Officers Participated
15.3.2023	Director-General of the International Organization for Mediation Preparatory Office visited the Judiciary	1
20 – 22.3.2023	The Chief Justice led a delegation to visit cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and met with the Vice-president of the Supreme People's Court	5
27 – 30.3.2023	Attended the Asia-Pacific Judicial Colloquium 2023 in Wellington, New Zealand	4

**Judicial Training Activities and Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions
Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2023-24**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
16.5, 17.5, 19.7, 7.8, 21.8, 19.9, 19.10, 30.10, 27.11.2023 & 23.1, 27.3.2024	Induction Briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	29
3.6.2023	Visit to the Government Laboratory	13
12.6.2023	Family Judgment Writing Sharing Session	10
13.6.2023	Training on e-court for Family Judges	5
26.6.2023	Talk entitled “Sir Edward Coke and the Common Law” by The Honourable Mr Justice Patrick Anthony Keane, Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal	50
21.8, 23.8, 27.11.2023 & 28.2.2024	Masters Sharing Sessions	51
Oct 2023, Feb & Mar 2024	Putonghua Courses	10
27.10.2023	Induction Course for Newly Appointed District Judges and Permanent Magistrates	14
22.11.2023	Briefing on Autopsy and Visit to the Forensic Medicine Centre	11
24.11.2023	Introduction to Case Settlement Conference	15
2.12.2023	Visit to the Independent Commission Against Corruption	16
7.12.2023	Briefing on Amendments to the Civil Procedure Law of Mainland China	13

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
2.2 & 1.3.2024	Sentencing Workshop for Magistrates	32
23.3.2024	Seminar on the roles, functions and duties of the National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Standing Committee of the NPC under the Constitution of the PRC	125

(B) Other Local Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
15.6.2023	Webinar entitled “Book Talk-The Timing of Guilty Pleas: Lessons from Common Law Jurisdictions (Cambridge University Press, 2023)”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
13.11.2023	Webinar entitled “Trusts in the Courts - a Period of Constant Change?”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	5
21.11.2023	Lecture entitled ““Law and Justice” and book signing for Croc and Roll Law”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
5.2.2024	Lecture entitled “The Common Law Lecture Series: Knowing Receipt after Byers v Saudi National Bank”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	3

(C) Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
27.4.2023	The Minister of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan visited the Judiciary	2
5.5.2023	The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Brunei Darussalam visited the Judiciary	4
11 – 13.5.2023	Visited Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and attended a seminar on exchanges of matrimonial and family law matters	5
18.5.2023	A group of Mainland judges attended the Master of Laws Programme of the City University of Hong Kong visited the Judiciary	1
21 – 24.5.2023	Visited Beijing and met with the President of the Supreme People’s Court	3
31.5.2023 – 4.6.2023	Attended the International Academy of Family Lawyers Asia Pacific Chapter Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand	1
15.6.2023	The President of the Higher People's Court of Zhejiang Province led a delegation to visit the Judiciary	9
4.8.2023	A delegation from the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law visited the Judiciary	1
24 – 26.8.2023	Attended the 12th Annual Legal Era India Conclave 2023 in New Delhi, India	1
7.9.2023	The Justice of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia visited the Judiciary	3
11-13.9.2023	Attended the International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) International Conference 2023 in Tokyo, Japan	2
11 – 14.9.2023	Attended “The HCCH Asia Pacific Week 2023 – Access to Justice and Sustainable Development: The Impact of the HCCH in an Inter-Connected World” organized by the Hague Conference on Private International Law	3

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
11.9.2023 – 15.12.2023	Three Mainland judges visited the Judiciary for a 3-month exchanges programme with focus on civil and commercial cases	22
15.9.2023	The Prosecutor-General of the Public Prosecutions Office of the Macao Special Administrative Region led a delegation to visit the Judiciary	2
20 – 22.9.2023	Attended the Seventh Seminar of Senior Judges of Cross-Strait and Hong Kong and Macao held in Macao	5
25.9.2023	A group of Mainland judges attending the 16th Advanced Programme for Chinese Senior Judges of the City University of Hong Kong visited the Judiciary	1
17.10.2023	Attended the seminar on "Mainland-HK Arrangement on Interim Measures Four Years on: Retrospect and Prospect"	1
29.10.2023 – 5.11.2023	A group of 17 Judges and Judicial Officers visited Beijing and had exchange with Mainland Judges and attended discussion forums and thematic talks on various topics. The delegation also visited court premises and facilities relating to technology and culture, etc.	17
31.10.2023	Attended the Second Summit for the digitalization in the Judiciary hosted by the Judiciary of North Macedonia	1
31.10.2023	Sir Gibuma Gibbs SALIKA, the Hon Chief Justice of the National and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea, led a delegation to visit the Judiciary	1
6.11.2023	Professor TIAN He, Head of the Center for National Index of Rule of Law of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, visited the Judiciary	1
6.11.2023	Attended the Fifth UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) Asia Pacific Judicial Summit - Judicial Conference	1

Date	Exchanges Activity/Meeting	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
7.11.2023	Attended the Fifth UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit - Judicial Roundtable	1
10.11.2023	Attended the Hong Kong Legal Week 2023: The Rule of Law for the Future	1
13-15.11.2023	Attended the 2023 Asia Pacific Coroners Society Conference in Sydney, Australia	1
15 – 16.11.2023	Attended the 2023 World Intellectual Property Organization Intellectual Property Judges Forum in Geneva, Switzerland	1
16.11.2023	The Rt Hon the Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, President of the Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre, led a delegation to visit the Judiciary	6
19.11.2023	Attended the Greater Bay Area Bankruptcy Law Forum	1
27.11.2023	Mr ZHANG Haibo, President of the Higher People's Court of Guangdong Province led a delegation to visit the Judiciary	8
7.12.2023	Officials from the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province, the Labour Affairs Bureau of Macao and the Labour Department of Hong Kong visited the Labour Tribunal	6
9.12.2023	Attended the International Seminar on Judicial Protection Involving Intellectual Property Rights	1
13-15.3.2024	Hosted the 8 th Judicial Seminar on Commercial Litigation attended by judges from 10 jurisdictions	12
28.3.2024	A 28-member delegation from Macao Judicial Officers Training Centre visited the Judiciary	1

**Judicial Training Activities and Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions
Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2024-25**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
19.4, 6.5, 17.5, 4.7, 30.7, 14.8, 4.9, 27.11, 12.12.2024, 6.1, 22.1, 11.2 & 6.3.2025	Induction Briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	31
25.5.2024	Masters Sharing Session	32
May - Nov 2024	Chinese Judgment Writing Course 2024	24
3.7.2024	Demonstration of Westlaw's Co-counsel Legal GenAI Assistant	13
Sep & Oct 2024	Putonghua Courses	9
8.11.2024	Family Court Seminar	22
18.1.2025	Visit to Lo Wu Correctional Institution	9
22.1.2025	Seminar on IT Security for the Judiciary	39
21.2 & 21.3.2025	Training on Mediation Referral and Settlement Conference	25
24.2.2025	Talk entitled “The International Character of Maritime Law and the Importance of the Jurisprudence of Asia” by The Honourable Mr Justice James Leslie Bain Allsop, Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal	45
3.3 & 10.3.2025	Training on iCMS for High Court Judges	36

(B) Other Local Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
16.4.2024	Webinar entitled “Proof-of-Foreign Law Issues in Greater Bay Area”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
17.4.2024	Seminar entitled “IP Rights and Competition Law: Legal Monopolies or Abuse of Dominance?”, organized by Hong Kong Bar Association	1
6.5.2024	Lecture entitled “Never say Never: Equity's Reach in the Modern Age”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	14
4.6.2024	Webinar entitled “The Scope and Structure of Unjust Enrichment”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
6-7.9.2024	Modern Families Conference 2024, organized by Hong Kong Family Law Association	10

(C) Exchanges with Other Jurisdictions

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
8.4.2024	Attended the 4th Conference of the International Advocacy Training Council 2024	2
15.4.2024 – 10.5.2024	Three Judges and Judicial Officers were attached to the High People's Court of Guangdong Province for exchange under the attachment programme in collaboration with the Supreme People's Court	3
17.4.2024	Visited the High People's Court of Guangdong Province and the Guangzhou Internet Court, and had professional exchanges with the Mainland judges and judicial staff on technology application in courts	3
20-21.4.2024	Attended the 5th Full Meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts in Doha, Qatar	3
23-26.4.2024	Attended the 4th Judicial Roundtable on Commercial Law in London, the United Kingdom	1
23.4.2024	A two-member delegation led by Mr TAN Jian, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of the Netherlands cum Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, visited the Judiciary	1
24.4.2024	A group of 46 Mainland judges and judicial assistants attending the Doctor of Juridical Science Programme for Chinese Senior Judges and the Master of Laws Programme for Chinese Judges of the City University of Hong Kong visited the Judiciary	1
5.5.2024	Attended the 2024 China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission Greater Bay Area Summit	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
6.5.2024	Attended the International Council for Commercial Arbitration Congress 2024	1
9.5.2024	Attended the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Arbitration “Going Global” Co-operation and Development Forum	1
21-24.5.2024	Attended the 14th Multinational Judicial Colloquium on Insolvency and International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) Conference 2024 in San Diego, the United States of America	1
22.5.2024	The Chief Justice delivered a keynote speech at the 8th ICAC Symposium	1
27-31.5.2024	Visited Shanghai and Zhejiang, met with Mr DENG Xiuming, the Executive Vice-president of the Supreme People’s Court, attended seminars, and had professional exchanges with Mainland judges	5
7.6.2024	A group of 57 legal professionals attending the 34th Presidents of Law Associations in Asia Summit visited the Judiciary	1
18.6.2024	A group of 22 government officials and members of the legal profession from Shenzhen attending a thematic training course on construction of rule of law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and legal regulatory interface and connectivity between the three places visited the Judiciary	1
26.6.2024	The Chief Justice delivered a speech at a webinar held by the Hong Kong Association of the United Kingdom	1
4.7.2024	A 33-member delegation from the China-AALCO Exchange and Research Program on International Law visited the Judiciary	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
16.8.2024	A 20-member delegation comprising officials from the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council visited the Judiciary	1
28.8.2024	Attended the International Bar Association Asia Pacific Regional Forum in Singapore	1
30.8.2024	A five-member delegation from the High Court of Sheger City, Ethiopia, visited the Judiciary	1
9-12.9.2024	Attended the Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges in Asia in Bogor City, Indonesia	1
11.9.2024	The Hon Martin CAUCHON, Vice-Chair of the Canada China Business Council, visited the Judiciary	1
12.9.2024	A 14-member delegation from Mainland Justice Departments/Bureaux as well as the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council visited the Judiciary	1
19.9.2024 – 13.12.2024	Four Mainland judges were attached to the High Court for exchange under the attachment programme in collaboration with the Supreme People's Court	32
24.9.2024	A nine-member delegation, led by His Excellency Judge Khalid bin Ali AL OBAIDLY, President of the Investment and Trade Court of Qatar, visited the Judiciary	4
26.9.2024	A group of 33 Mainland judges attending the 17th Advanced Programme for Chinese Senior Judges of the City University of Hong Kong visited the Judiciary	2
26-27.9.2024	Attended the Forum on Asian Insolvency Reform in Singapore	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
7.10.2024	Attended the International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) International Seminar in Seoul, Republic of Korea	1
9-10.10.2024	Attended the 2024 World Intellectual Property Organization Intellectual Property Judges Forum in Geneva, Switzerland	1
10-14.10.2024	The Chief Justice attended the 19th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific and the opening ceremony of the 37th LAWASIA Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1
15.10.2024	A five-member delegation from the East China University of Political Science and Law visited the Judiciary	3
30.10.2024 – 1.11.2024	Attended the 20th National Family Law Conference in Perth, Australia	1
3-10.11.2024	A group of 20 Judges and Judicial Officers visited Sichuan for an exchange visit programme. The delegation engaged in exchanges and attended discussion forums and thematic talks on various topics. The delegation also visited court buildings and facilities relating to technology and culture, etc.	20
7.11.2024	Professor Ignacio TIRADO, Secretary-General of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, visited the Judiciary	1
7.11.2024	Attended the Hong Kong Legal Week 2024: Joint Contribution to the Construction of Rule of Law in the GBA	1
8.11.2024	Attended the Hong Kong Legal Week 2024: Rule of Law: The Best Business Environment	2
11-12.11.2024	Attended the International Bar Association Anti-Corruption Committee Asia Conference in Singapore	1

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
13.11.2024	An eight-member delegation led by Mr JIA Yu, President of the Shanghai High People's Court, visited the Judiciary	11
15.11.2024	A 20-member delegation comprising members from the Panel of Advisers to the Youth Court, staff from the Rehabilitation and Protection Group of the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and judges from the Youth Courts of the Family Justice Courts of Singapore, visited the Judiciary	2
28.11.2024	Mr Adam WILLIAMS, Chief Executive of Intellectual Property Office of the United Kingdom, visited the Judiciary	1
3.12.2024	Dr Suyud MARGONO, Chairman of the Indonesian Intellectual Property Attorneys Association, visited the Judiciary	1
3.12.2024	Mr LI Zijun, Deputy Commissioner of the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration, visited the Judiciary	1
9.12.2024	Mr WU Hongbo, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on European Affairs, visited the Judiciary	1
7.1.2025	Professor Nico SCHRIJVER, Member of the Curatorium of the Hague Academy of International Law and Professor Emeritus of Public International Law at Leiden University, the Netherlands visited the Judiciary	1
9.1.2025	A eight-member delegation of the Supreme People's Court visited the Judiciary	1
20-21.1.2025	A seven-member delegation led Mr MAO Zhonghua, Vice-President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China, attended the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2025 and visited the Judiciary	6

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers participated
18.2.2025	Judge Peter TOMKA, Member of the International Court of Justice, visited the Judiciary	1
18-19.2.2025	A 13-member delegation visited Guangdong on family matters	5
17.3-16.4.2025	Three Judges and Judicial Officers were attached to the Shanghai High People's Court for exchange under the attachment programme in collaboration with the Supreme People's Court	3
19.3.2025	Hosted the International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) Hong Kong 2025 Judicial Round Table	2
28.3.2025	The Employment and Labour Affairs Committee of the Daini Tokyo Bar Association of Japan visited the Judiciary	3
24-26.3.2025	Attended the Asia Pacific Judicial Colloquium in Canberra, Australia	3

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA012

(Question Serial No. 3084)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

As mentioned in its document, the Judiciary will facilitate the greater use of remote hearings for legal proceedings at all levels of court where appropriate, and to develop all necessary technologies for such purposes. Will the Administration inform this Council of:

- (1) the number and types of cases handled by way of remote hearing at various levels of court over the past 5 years;
- (2) the effect of the use of remote hearing on case handling in terms of time, costs, efficiency, etc. with specific data;
- (3) the manpower, establishment and ranks of the personnel in the Judiciary responsible for remote hearings and the expenditure for them;
- (4) details of plans, timetable and relevant estimates for the development of technologies necessary for remote hearings.

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers and types of remote hearings conducted at various levels of court from 2020 to 2024 are tabulated by year as follows:

2020

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities (from April 2020)		Phone hearings (from February 2020)
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	4	1	0
High Court	48	0	350
District Court	0	0	22
Family Court	10	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	0	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	0	Not applicable	0
Total	62	1	372

2021

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	3	6	0
High Court	99	0	342
District Court	0	0	134
Family Court	35	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	2	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	8	Not applicable	0
Total	147	6	476

2022

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	7	4	0
High Court	262	0	60
District Court	27	0	143
Family Court	54	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	8	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	38	Not applicable	0
Total	396	4	203

2023

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	3	2	0
High Court	4	0	66
District Court	0	0	0
Family Court	30	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	1	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	12	Not applicable	0
Total	50	2	66

2024

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	2	1	0
High Court	3	0	111
District Court	1	0	173
Family Court	22	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	3	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	17	Not applicable	0
Total	48	1	284

Notes:

- (i) The above figures include hearings where Judges and/or Judicial Officers and/or one or more parties were physically absent from the court during the proceedings.
- (ii) All phone hearings conducted were for civil proceedings.

- (2) The Judiciary has spared no efforts in making greater and more effective use of technology with a view to enhancing the efficiency of court operations. These technology initiatives are conducive to reducing court waiting times in different ways. As far as remote hearing is concerned, it saves the time and cost of participants such as parties, legal practitioners and witnesses within or outside Hong Kong in travelling to court buildings to attend court proceedings in person, thereby facilitating the listing of court proceedings. Remote hearing also enables the court to better tackle unforeseen situations where physical presence may not be possible (such as when social distancing measures are in place during a pandemic). It follows that all the remote hearings which were conducted during the past five years, particularly during the pandemic where physical hearings could not otherwise be held, contributed towards reducing the average waiting times for the relevant civil case types at different levels of court. However, given court waiting times could be affected by a host of factors including the availability of Judges and Judicial Officers, parties, legal practitioners and witnesses, as well as

the complexity of individual cases, it is not possible to produce empirical data on the time and cost saved by adopting more remote hearing in court proceedings.

- (3) & (4) In line with the Judiciary's commitment to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court business, the Judiciary has been taking forward and promoting the use of remote hearing on an incremental basis from 2020. In 2021, the Judiciary introduced the browser-based video-conferencing option so that parties could use common web browsers and normal desktop or laptop computer devices to connect to the Judiciary's video-conferencing facilities. In 2022, the Judiciary further extended the remote hearing system to support the conduct of remote hearing outside court when access to court facilities was not allowed say due to public health or other reasons. With experience gained on the arrangement and conduct of remote hearing, the Judiciary has progressively been updating the information technology (IT)/audio-visual (AV) facilities and enhancing the IT systems with improved workflows for meeting new operational needs over the years. We have been further enhancing the IT systems for remote hearing to include new functions as and when required, such as remote signing of bail form by parties at the remote end. More than 2 100 remote hearings were conducted mostly on civil proceedings at various levels of court as from February 2020 to February 2025 and the experience has so far been positive.

As the Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its manpower to support the implementation of different technology initiatives having regard to operational needs, there is no breakdown on the manpower deployed exclusively for remote hearing. The relevant expenditure is included in the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's Information and Communications Technology initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26. Within this estimated expenditure provision, around \$36 million is estimated to be required for installation of IT/AV facilities and support equipment, and carrying out related services in courtrooms and other office areas, including those required for supporting remote hearing.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**JA013****(Question Serial No. 1681)**Head: (80) JudiciarySubhead (No. & title): (-)Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory FunctionsControlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)Director of Bureau: Not applicableQuestion:

Please provide information on the number of cases filed and the court waiting time in the Competition Tribunal, the Lands Tribunal, the Coroner's Court, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal and the Obscene Articles Tribunal for the past 3 years, and also the establishment, number of posts and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff for the past 3 years and the coming year.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

The number of cases filed and the average court waiting times in the Competition Tribunal, the Lands Tribunal, the Coroner's Court, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal and the Obscene Articles Tribunal for the past three years from 2022 to 2024 are appended below:

Tribunal/court	Number of cases filed		
	2022	2023	2024
Competition Tribunal	3	3	0
Lands Tribunal	3 998	4 739	5 281
Coroner's Court	131	195	138
Labour Tribunal	3 378	4 348	4 879
Small Claims Tribunal	41 514	52 304	57 454
Obscene Articles Tribunal	34	14	163

Tribunal/court*	Average waiting time (days)		
	2022	2023	2024
Lands Tribunal			
- from setting down of a case to hearing			
appeal cases	-#	8	6
compensation cases	45	15	46
building management cases	20	32	34
tenancy cases	16	15	18
Coroner's Court			
- from date of listing to hearing	42	34	32
Labour Tribunal			
- from appointment to filing of a case	28	38	36
- from filing of a case to first hearing	24	23	23
Small Claims Tribunal			
- from filing of a case to first hearing	37	35	41
Obscene Articles Tribunal			
- from receipt of application to classification	2	2	3
- from referral by a magistrate to determination	-#	-#	18

* As only ten cases have been set down for trial/substantive hearing in the Competition Tribunal since its establishment, the waiting time is inapplicable. The target average waiting time will be considered when more cases are set down for trial/substantive hearing at the Tribunal.

Not applicable as no such cases have been filed.

The establishment, number of posts and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff of the Lands Tribunal, the Coroner's Court, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal and the Obscene Articles Tribunal for the past three years (i.e. 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) and the coming year (i.e. 2025-26) are as follows:

Tribunal/ court	Establish- ment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision** (\$ million)			
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)
Lands Tribunal	31	3 – District Judge	23.9	24.9	25.6	33.6 ~
		2 – Member				
		8 – Judicial Clerk grade staff				
		17 – Clerical staff				
		1 – Office Assistant				

Tribunal/ court	Establish- ment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision** (\$ million)			
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)
Coroner's Court	14	3 – Coroner 1 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 8 – Clerical staff 1 – Secretarial staff 1 – Workman II	10.1	10.5	10.8	10.8
Labour Tribunal	91	1 – Principal Presiding Officer 8 – Presiding Officer 14 – Judicial Clerk grade staff@ 15 – Tribunal Officer@ 42 – Clerical staff@ 5 – Secretarial staff@ 2 – Office Assistant 4 – Workman II	58.8	61.3	63.0	62.8 ^
Small Claims Tribunal	80	1 – Principal Adjudicator 11 – Adjudicator 21 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 46 – Clerical staff 1 – Office Assistant	55.0	57.2	58.9	58.9
Obscene Articles Tribunal	7	2 – Magistrates 5 – Clerical staff	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.9

** Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible JJOs and civil service support staff.

@ Including one Judicial Clerk grade post and one Clerical staff post regraded from one Tribunal Officer post and one Secretarial staff post respectively in 2024-25.

~ Including the provision reserved for creation of new posts, which is subject to the caseload position of the Lands Tribunal and the approval from relevant authorities.

^ One Office Assistant post is scheduled to be deleted in 2025-26.

The Competition Tribunal is established under the Competition Ordinance (the Ordinance) as a specialised court with primary jurisdiction to hear and adjudicate competition-related cases. According to the Ordinance, every Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (CFI), will, by virtue of his or her appointment as CFI Judge, be a member of the Competition Tribunal. The Ordinance provides that the Chief Executive shall, on the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission, appoint two of the members of the Competition Tribunal to be the President and Deputy President of the Competition Tribunal respectively. The Ordinance also provides that, among others, every Registrar, Senior

Deputy Registrar and Deputy Registrar (registrars) of the High Court, by virtue of that appointment, holds the corresponding office or position in the Competition Tribunal. Where there is no case handled by the Competition Tribunal, the CFI Judges and registrars of the High Court will continue to discharge their normal duties as a CFI Judge and as a registrar of the High Court.

On 15 March 2013, the Judiciary obtained the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to create a CFI Judge post and a Deputy Registrar post for the purpose of setting up the Competition Tribunal. The additional CFI Judge post seeks to re-compense the projected total judicial time to be spent by the President, Deputy President and other CFI Judges/members of the Competition Tribunal on the work of the Competition Tribunal. Similarly, the additional Deputy Registrar post covers the estimated aggregate amount of time to be spent by the registrars of the High Court on the work of the Competition Tribunal.

A total of nine non-directorate civil service posts were created in the Judiciary for supporting the work of the Competition Tribunal. The estimated salary provision for the two JJO posts and these nine support staff posts for the past three years (i.e. 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) and the coming year (i.e. 2025-26) are as follows:

Tribunal/ court	Establish- ment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision ^{##} (\$ million)			
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)
Competition Tribunal	11	1 – Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court	11.3	11.7	12.1	12.1
		1 – Deputy Registrar, High Court				
		1 – Court Interpreter grade staff				
		3 – Judicial Clerk grade staff				
		4 – Clerical staff				
		1 – Secretarial staff				

^{##} Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible civil service support staff.

To ensure the optimal use of manpower resources having regard to the caseload of the Competition Tribunal and the increasing operational needs of the High Court, some of the non-directorate staff have been temporarily deployed to support the JJOs in handling court hearings and registry business in the High Court in addition to supporting the operation and administration (including updating of rules and legal references) of the Competition Tribunal.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA014

(Question Serial No. 1683)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The Hong Kong Judicial Institute is responsible for organizing judicial training activities on various topics for all JJOs (including designated judges). Please set out the details of the various judicial training activities attended by the JJOs at all levels of court in the past year, including the number of participants, their ranks and monthly salaries.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

The Hong Kong Judicial Institute (JI) is responsible for organizing judicial training and professional education activities for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) (including designated judges) at all levels of court. JI is overseen by a Governing Body chaired by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and comprises court leaders at the respective court levels, two experienced judges in the High Court and the Judiciary Administrator.

The participation of JJOs varies among the different training activities, depending on the nature of training, the professional and operational needs of JJOs, and their availability as permitted by court diaries. Details of the judicial training activities attended by JJOs in 2024-25 are at **Annex 1**. The monthly salary of JJOs at all levels of court is at **Annex 2**.

**Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers
for the financial year 2024-25**

(A) Local Judicial Training Organized by the Hong Kong Judicial Institute

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers (at various ranks) participated
19.4, 6.5, 17.5, 4.7, 30.7, 14.8, 4.9, 27.11, 12.12.2024, 6.1, 22.1, 11.2 & 6.3.2025	Induction Briefings for Deputy Magistrates / Adjudicators	31
25.5.2024	Masters Sharing Session	32
May - Nov 2024	Chinese Judgment Writing Course 2024	24
3.7.2024	Demonstration of Westlaw's Co-counsel Legal GenAI Assistant	13
Sep & Oct 2024	Putonghua Courses	9
8.11.2024	Family Court Seminar	22
18.1.2025	Visit to Lo Wu Correctional Institution	9
22.1.2025	Seminar on IT Security for the Judiciary	39
21.2 & 21.3.2025	Training on Mediation Referral and Settlement Conference	25
24.2.2025	Talk entitled “The International Character of Maritime Law and the Importance of the Jurisprudence of Asia” by The Honourable Mr Justice James Leslie Bain Allsop, Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal	45
3.3 & 10.3.2025	Training on Integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) for High Court Judges	36

(B) Other Local Judicial Training Activities Attended by Judges and Judicial Officers

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers (at various ranks) participated
16.4.2024	Webinar entitled “Proof-of-Foreign Law Issues in Greater Bay Area”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	1
17.4.2024	Seminar entitled “IP Rights and Competition Law: Legal Monopolies or Abuse of Dominance?”, organized by Hong Kong Bar Association	1
6.5.2024	Lecture entitled “Never say Never: Equity's Reach in the Modern Age”, organized by the University of Hong Kong	14
4.6.2024	Webinar entitled “The Scope and Structure of Unjust Enrichment”, organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
6-7.9.2024	Modern Families Conference 2024, organized by Hong Kong Family Law Association	10

(C) Judicial Training Activities Organized with/by Other Jurisdictions/Organizations

Date	Activity	Number of Judges and Judicial Officers (at various ranks) participated
21-24.5.2024	The Fourteenth Multinational Judicial Colloquium on Insolvency and International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) Conference 2024 in San Diego, the United States of America	1
9-12.9.2024	Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges in Asia in Bogor City, Indonesia	1
26-27.9.2024	Forum on Asian Insolvency Reform in Singapore	1
7.10.2024	International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) International Seminar in Seoul, Republic of Korea	1

Monthly Salary of Judges and Judicial Officers at all Levels of Court

Position as at 1.3.2025			
Level of Court	Rank	Judicial Service Pay Scale Point	Monthly Salary \$
Court of Final Appeal	Chief Justice	19	423,850
	Permanent Judge	18	411,950
Court of Appeal of the High Court	Chief Judge of the High Court	18	411,950
	Justice of Appeal	17	371,450
Court of First Instance of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance	16	354,050
High Court Masters' Office	Registrar	15	287,100
	Senior Deputy Registrar	14	261,850 - 277,750
	Deputy Registrar	13	245,300 - 260,100
District Court (including Family Court and Lands Tribunal)	Chief District Judge	15	287,100
	Principal Family Court Judge	14	261,850 - 277,750
	District Judge	13	245,300 - 260,100
	Member, Lands Tribunal	12	211,050 - 223,950
District Court Masters' Office	Registrar	11	194,400 - 206,100
	Deputy Registrar	10	177,850 - 188,650

Position as at 1.3.2025			
Level of Court	Rank	Judicial Service Pay Scale Point	Monthly Salary \$
Magistrates' Courts/ Specialized Court/ Other Tribunals	Chief Magistrate	13	245,300 - 260,100
	Principal Magistrate/ Principal Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Principal Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal	11	194,400 - 206,100
	Coroner/ Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal/ Magistrate	10 7-10	177,850 - 188,650 157,405 - 188,650
	Special Magistrate	1 - 6	102,315 - 120,885

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**JA015****(Question Serial No. 1684)**Head: (80) JudiciarySubhead (No. & title): (-)Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory FunctionsControlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)Director of Bureau: Not applicableQuestion:

Please provide the figures in each of the past 3 years:

1. No. of leave applications filed for judicial review;
2. No. of leave applications filed for judicial review relating to non-refoulement claims;
3. Average processing time for a judicial review case from date of filing of leave application to date of decision;
4. No. of substantive judicial review cases filed; and
5. No. of substantive judicial review cases filed relating to non-refoulement claims.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)Reply:

The relevant statistics for the past three years from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Judicial Review Cases	2022	2023	2024
(a) No. of leave applications filed	1 545	2 191	2 549
(b) No. of leave applications filed relating to non-refoulement claims	1 445	2 087	2 418
(c) Average processing time of all leave applications (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision) ¹	247 days	204 days	99 days
(d) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed	77	43	49
(e) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed relating to non-refoulement claims	64	35	32

Remarks:

- ¹ The Judiciary only maintains statistics on the average processing time of leave applications at the Court of First Instance of the High Court and such statistics only take into account the number of leave applications with leave granted or leave refused as at the report generation date, but exclude those withdrawn or outstanding leave applications.
- ² The relevant statistics are live data which are subject to change depending on the date and time of preparation of the statistical information.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA016

(Question Serial No. 1685)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Please provide information of the past 3 years:

1. the number of divorce cases filed with the Family Court;
2. the number of applications for injunction orders / interim custody orders by victims of domestic violence;
3. the number of applications for maintenance;
4. the number of cases in relation to access and custody ruled by the court;
5. the average waiting time, the longest waiting time and their respective target waiting times for Family Court cases;
6. the establishment, number of posts and expenditure on the remuneration of judges, judicial officers and support staff in the Family Court.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

(1) – (5)

The respective numbers of divorce cases filed to the Family Court from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024
Number of divorce cases filed in the year	16 513	20 621	19 989

The statistics on the average waiting time ^{Note 1} and the longest waiting time for the relevant cases from 2022 to 2024, and their respective target waiting time are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024	2025 Target
Special Procedure List				
Average waiting time (Days)	35	35	35	35
Longest waiting time (Days)	44	35	35	-
Defended List				
Average waiting time (Days)	58	53	42	110
Longest waiting time (Days)	104	144	103	-
Financial Applications				
Average waiting time (Days)	49	71	73	110 - 140
Longest waiting time (Days)	250	253	189	-

Note 1: The waiting time counts from setting down of a case to hearing.

While the Judiciary does not currently maintain statistical breakdown as requested, we are enhancing the data collection system with a view to collating some basic data relating to ancillary relief involved in divorce cases (including but not limited to maintenance orders) as far as practicable later this year.

- (6) The establishment, number of posts and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff of the Family Court for the past three years are as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number of Posts			
Principal Family Court Judge	1	1	1
District Judge	7	7	7
Judicial Clerk grade staff	26	26	26
Clerical staff	23	23	23
Secretarial staff	1	1	1
Workman II	5	5	5
Establishment	63	63	63

Note 2: Excluding the deployment of Judicial Officers serving as Family Masters in the Family Court since October 2023.

	2022-23 (\$ million)	2023-24 (\$ million)	2024-25 (\$ million)
Estimated Salary Provision ^{Note 3}	45.4	47.2	49.0

Note 3: Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible JJOs and civil service support staff.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA017

(Question Serial No. 0600)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The Judiciary has been proactively implementing a host of measures to ensure that non-refoulement claim-related cases are handled as expeditiously as reasonably practicable, including increasing manpower to handle the growing number of cases. Meanwhile, the first Deputy Judge of the Court of First Instance (CFI) “for the purposes of cases relating to non-refoulement claims only” was appointed in February this year. In this regard, will the Administration inform this Council of:

- (1) the number of cases of non-refoulement claim-related leave applications for judicial review (JR) filed with the CFI and the number of judges handling these leave applications for JR in each of the past 3 years;
- (2) the total number of Deputy Judges of the CFI the Judiciary plans to appoint for the purposes of cases relating to non-refoulement claims and the resources earmarked for this purpose in 2025/26; and
- (3) how the Judiciary plans to streamline the relevant court procedures in the future to enhance the efficiency in handling non-refoulement claim-related cases?

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

The number of leave applications filed with the Court of First Instance of the High Court for judicial review relating to non-refoulement claims in the past three years from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Year	No. of leave applications filed for judicial review relating to non-refoulement claims
2022	1 445
2023	2 087
2024	2 418

* The relevant statistics are live data which are subject to change depending on the date and time of preparation of the statistical information.

The Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its resources at different levels of court for handling non-refoulement claim related cases as expeditiously as reasonably practicable. On top of the judges and supporting staff in the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal who are handling these cases alongside all other cases on a rotational or day-to-day basis, the Judiciary has been engaging Deputy Judges in the Court of First Instance of the High Court and contract supporting staff to assist in handling non-refoulement claim related cases. Currently, six retired judges have been appointed as Deputy Judges to assist in processing these cases.

To further expedite the disposal of backlog and incoming non-refoulement claim related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which eligible private practitioners from the legal sector are appointed as Deputy Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims. The Judiciary is initially planning to appoint around ten such special Deputy Judges, each for a specified period of time. Three short-term appointments have been made so far and more appointments are expected to be made in due course. The estimated expenditure for engaging these Deputy Judges under the special scheme in 2025-26 is \$4.0 million.

Furthermore, the administrative procedures and presentation of the judgment/decision notice have been suitably streamlined so as to expedite the processing of cases by judges. The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the progress and flexibly deploy resources in response to operational needs, with a view to enhancing the efficiency in handling non-refoulement claim related cases as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA018

(Question Serial No. 1563)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Concerning the actual waiting times being substantially longer than the target waiting times for criminal cases in the District Court and the Court of First Instance of the High Court in 2024, the Judiciary explained it was because priority was accorded to a considerable number of cases relating to anti-extradition amendment bill incidents (anti-EAB cases) and national security (NS cases) that were complicated and required longer trials. Regarding the targets for 2025, will the Administration inform this Council of:

1. the number of the abovementioned anti-EAB and NS cases that are still outstanding; whether the Judiciary has assessed the impact of these cases on court waiting times. If yes, what are the details?
2. whether the Judiciary has collected any statistics of the number of cases affected as a result of the waiting times for criminal cases in the abovementioned courts being too long over the past few years. If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

In 2024-25, the Judiciary continued to make pro-active and dedicated efforts in implementing multi-pronged measures to expedite court proceedings, with priority given to cases relating to the 2019 anti-extradition amendment bill incidents (anti-EAB cases) and national security (NS cases) as appropriate. As at end February 2025, the Judiciary had disposed of around 96% of over 2 350 anti-EAB cases and around 86% of over 230 NS cases brought at various levels of court.

Owing to the priority handling of the anti-EAB and NS cases, and that quite a number of these cases require long criminal trials, the listing of other criminal cases has been inevitably affected (particularly the plea and sentence cases and the jury trials committed to the High

Court, and the appeals from the Magistrates' Courts). As at end March 2025, around 60 criminal cases listed to be heard before the limited pool of criminal judges of the High Court have to be re-fixed as a result of the longer than expected trial durations of various high-profile anti-EAB and NS cases. Other criminal proceedings in the Court of First Instance also remains long, mainly due to the more acute pressure on judicial resources arising from the requirement to field three criminal judges to handle each NS case.

With the majority of the remaining anti-EAB and NS cases being set down for trial in 2025, their impact on the court waiting times for other proceedings is expected to be gradually reduced. Indeed, the average waiting time for appeal cases from the Magistrates' Courts has been reduced from 208 days in 2023 to 131 days in 2024. Notable improvement has also been observed at the District Court where the average court waiting time for criminal cases has been decreased from 442 days in 2023 to 397 days in 2024 despite an increased caseload from 1 331 cases in 2023 to 1 623 cases in 2024. The Judiciary anticipates steady improvements to the court waiting times in overall terms at all levels of courts in the coming years and will make on-going efforts for improvements as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA019

(Question Serial No. 1564)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions,
(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The Judiciary plans to reduce civil service posts by 9 posts under Programme (1) and by 2 posts under Programme (2) respectively. In this regard, please inform this Council of:

1. the positions and the responsibilities of the 11 civil service posts involved;
2. the total annual expenditure involved for the 11 civil service posts;
3. whether the reduction of civil service posts as outlined in the budget estimates will affect the operation of the Judiciary.

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

(1)

In 2025-26, the overall decrease of 11 civil service posts in the Judiciary is the net result of -

- (a) the lapse of 11 time-limited posts upon completion of the relevant projects or tasks;
- (b) the deletion of ten vacant posts for providing general support services to various courts and offices; and
- (c) creation of ten new permanent posts for enhancing support in certain areas of work.

The Judiciary has proposed the above changes in staffing establishment following a regular review of operational needs and manpower requirements in the context of preparing the annual estimates.

In 2025-26, we are proposing to create ten permanent civil service posts covering grades of Judicial Clerk, Executive Officer, Analyst / Programmer and Bailiff for the following purposes -

- (a) the application of various technology initiatives to meet the emerging needs of the court and registry operation and the relevant legislative work;
- (b) the promotion of greater use of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution; and
- (c) enhancing information technology (IT) security threat management and the implementation of new IT security measures.

(2)

The net decrease of 11 civil service posts in 2025-26 accounts for a net reduction of around \$6 million in the provision for salaries and related expenses.

(3)

In view of the Government's overall fiscal constraints, the Judiciary will continue to ensure effective and efficient administration of justice through prudent and optimal use of financial and manpower resources as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA020

(Question Serial No. 1565)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Regarding the professional backgrounds of Judges before they joined the Judiciary, please provide the Council with the following figures with breakdown by backgrounds as solicitors and barristers:

1. Across all levels of court and tribunals at present, what were the professional backgrounds of Judges before they joined the Judiciary?
2. Over the past 3 years, how many Judges of the Judiciary were internally elevated to higher levels of court?
3. What was the increase in remuneration for these Judges upon their internal elevation to higher levels of court?
4. Across all levels of court and tribunals, what were the professional backgrounds of Deputy Judges and Deputy Magistrates before they joined the Judiciary and their respective remunerations?

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

(1)

All Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) in Hong Kong are appointed in accordance with Articles 88 and 92 of the Basic Law, and the professional qualifications as stipulated in the provisions of the relevant Ordinances.¹

As at 1 March 2025, around 80% and 20% of the substantive JJOs at different levels of court are professionally qualified to practice respectively as barristers and solicitors in the relevant courts in Hong Kong or any other common law jurisdiction.

(2)

In the past three years, namely 2022 to 2024, 15 serving JJOs were appointed to higher levels of court.

(3)

JJOs are remunerated on the corresponding pay point of their respective judicial rank according to the Judicial Service Pay Scale upon their appointment to the relevant higher levels of court, regardless of whether they are newly recruited from the legal profession or from other levels of court within the Judiciary. The Judicial Service Pay Scale and salary range of JJOs at all levels of court is attached at **Annex A**.

Apart from salary, JJOs are also provided with a package of benefits and allowances corresponding to their judicial rank. The details are summarized at **Annex B**.

(4)

In accordance with the relevant provisions in the Ordinances², all Deputy JJOs are appointed by the Chief Justice at different levels of court for different periods from time to time for meeting changing operational needs. The professional qualifications required for Deputy JJOs are the same as those of the substantive JJOs at the corresponding ranks at the relevant levels of court.

The Judiciary does not have statistical breakdown of Deputy JJOs by their professional backgrounds. The Deputy JJOs of the Judiciary include JJOs from the lower levels of court, private practitioners and retired JJOs. The honoraria for Deputy JJOs is pegged to the monthly salary of substantive JJOs at the same rank and is calculated on a daily basis.

¹ Section 12 of Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance (Cap. 484), Sections 9 and 37AA of High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4), Sections 5 and 14AA of District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336), Section 4 of Lands Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 17), Sections 5AA and 5AB of Magistrates Ordinance (Cap. 227), Section 3AA of Coroners Ordinance (Cap. 504), Section 4AA of Small Claims Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 338), and Section 4A of Labour Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 25)

² Sections 10, 37AB, 37AC, 37A and 37B of High Court Ordinance (Cap. 4), Sections 7, 14AB, 14A and 14B of District Court Ordinance (Cap. 336), Sections 5 and 6A of Lands Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 17), Section 5A of Magistrates Ordinance (Cap. 227), Section 3A of Coroners Ordinance (Cap. 504), Section 4A of Small Claims Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 338), and Section 5A of Labour Tribunal Ordinance (Cap. 25)

The remuneration of JJOs at all levels of court is as follows (effective since 1.4.2024):

Level of Court	Rank	Judicial Service Pay Scale Point	Monthly Salary \$
Court of Final Appeal	Chief Justice	19	423,850
	Permanent Judge	18	411,950
Court of Appeal of the High Court	Chief Judge of the High Court	18	411,950
	Justice of Appeal	17	371,450
Court of First Instance of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance	16	354,050
High Court Masters' Office	Registrar	15	287,100
	Senior Deputy Registrar	14	261,850 – 277,750
	Deputy Registrar	13	245,300 – 260,100
District Court (including Family Court and Lands Tribunal)	Chief District Judge	15	287,100
	Principal Family Court Judge	14	261,850 – 277,750
	District Judge	13	245,300 – 260,100
	Member, Lands Tribunal	12	211,050 – 223,950
District Court Masters' Office	Registrar	11	194,400 – 206,100
	Deputy Registrar	10	177,850 – 188,650

Level of Court	Rank	Judicial Service Pay Scale Point	Monthly Salary \$
Magistrates' Courts/ Specialized Court/ Other Tribunals	Chief Magistrate	13	245,300 – 260,100
	Principal Magistrate/ Principal Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Principal Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal	11	194,400 – 206,100
	Coroner/ Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal	10	177,850 – 188,650
	Magistrate	7-10	157,405 – 188,650
	Special Magistrate	1-6	102,315 – 120,885

Annex B

Level of Court	Rank	Housing Benefits¹	Judicial Dress Allowance	Medical and Dental Services Provided by the Government or the Hospital Authority and Medical Insurance Allowance	Local Education Allowance, Overseas Education Allowance (OEA) and School Passage Allowance (SPA)^{2&3}	Leave Passage Allowance (LPA)³
Court of Final Appeal	Chief Justice	√	—	√	√	√
	Permanent Judge					
Court of Appeal of the High Court	Chief Judge of the High Court	√	—	√	√	√
	Justice of Appeal		√			
Court of First Instance of the High Court	Judge of the Court of First Instance	√	√	√	√	√
High Court Masters' Office	Registrar	√	√	√	√	√
	Senior Deputy Registrar					
	Deputy Registrar					
District Court (including Family Court and Lands Tribunal)	Chief District Judge	√	—	√	√	√
	Principal Family Court Judge					
	District Judge		√			
	Member, Lands Tribunal		—			
District Court Masters' Office	Registrar	√	—	√	√	√
	Deputy Registrar					

¹ Housing benefits corresponding to the respective judicial ranks include Judiciary Quarters for Judges at High Court or above or housing allowance for Judges and Judicial Officers at District Court or below. Provision is subject to the terms and conditions of individual housing schemes.

² Judges and Judicial Officers who were offered appointment before 1 August 1996 may be eligible to claim OEA and SPA.

³ Dependent children who are in receipt of SPA are not eligible for LPA under the prevention of double benefits rules.

Level of Court	Rank	Housing Benefits ¹	Judicial Dress Allowance	Medical and Dental Services Provided by the Government or the Hospital Authority and Medical Insurance Allowance	Local Education Allowance, Overseas Education Allowance (OEA) and School Passage Allowance (SPA) ^{2&3}	Leave Passage Allowance (LPA) ³
Magistrates' Courts/ Specialized Court/ Other Tribunals	Chief Magistrate	√	—	√	√	√
	Principal Magistrate/ Principal Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Principal Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal					
	Coroner/ Presiding Officer, Labour Tribunal/ Adjudicator, Small Claims Tribunal/ Magistrate (at Judicial Service Pay Scale Point 10)					
	Magistrate (at Judicial Service Pay Scale Points 7-9)					
	Special Magistrate					—

Pension Benefits: Judges and Judicial Officers appointed on terms which attract pension benefits (i.e. permanent and pensionable terms) are granted pension benefits under the Pension Benefits (Judicial Officers) Ordinance, Cap. 401 upon retirement.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA021

(Question Serial No. 1566)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions,
(2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Under Subhead 000 Operational expenses, the original estimate for Salaries under Personal Emoluments in 2024-25 is \$1.51 billion while the revised estimate is \$1.43 billion, which, it is believed, is due to the manpower shortage in the Judiciary. The latest estimate for Salaries in 2025-26 is \$1.52 billion. In this regard, will the Administration inform this Council of:

1. the current number of vacancies in the Judiciary, and what posts they are;
2. whether the Judiciary is of the view that sufficient manpower can be recruited this year to fill the vacancies, given that the estimate for 2025-26 is higher than that for 2024-25;
3. the expenditure for salaries in 2025-26 if the size of the staffing establishment in 2024-25 is maintained.

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

The staffing establishment of the Judiciary as at 31 March 2025 will be 2 079 posts, comprising 1 863 civil service posts and 216 posts for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs).

In line with prevailing budgetary practice, the expenditure for salaries and related expenses in 2025-26 (next financial year) is estimated on the basis of the actual manpower size and composition in the 2024-25 (current financial year), as well as the estimated expenditure for the overall staffing establishment in 2025-26. Suitable adjustments have also been made for the impact of the small number of vacancies yet to be filled in the overall estimated total expenditure for the Judiciary.

The number of vacancies vary at different times of the year as they will continually be affected by changes arising from retirement, resignation, internal deployment, promotion and appointment to other civil service grades, etc.

As regards judicial vacancies, the Judiciary has been conducting more frequent open recruitment exercises in recent years. In the previous round of recruitment exercises for JJOs, seven Court of First Instance (CFI) Judges and nine District Judges were appointed in 2024-25. For Permanent Magistrates, it is anticipated that new appointments will be made later in 2025 after the completion of the recruitment formalities. In November 2024, a new round of open recruitment for CFI Judges was launched and new appointments are anticipated to be made in 2025.

As for vacant civil service posts, they represent around 9% of the civil service establishment across various grades, including mainly Judicial Clerk, Court Interpreter, Clerical Officer and Clerical Assistant. To ensure there is adequate manpower support for sustaining court operations, maintaining essential services and delivering major initiatives, the Judiciary has been conducting open recruitment and promotion exercises for various grades and ranks all year round.

In overall terms, it is genuinely and imminently necessary for the Judiciary to fill all the JJO vacancies and civil service vacancies so that we can continue to discharge its constitutional judicial duty, cope with the increasing caseload and shorten the court waiting times, maintain essential court operations, and deliver technology initiatives, with a view to ensuring effective and efficient administration of justice in Hong Kong. Operational experience indicates that all the vacancies are transitional in nature as they will continually be filled at different junctures following the completion of the relevant recruitment and promotion procedures.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA022

(Question Serial No. 0293)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The Small Claims Tribunal (SCT), which facilitates the public to pursue their monetary claims, has a high service utilization rate. There are views that the claim ceiling of \$75,000 should be increased. In this regard, please inform this Council of:

- (1) the expenditure on services provided by the SCT in the past year; and
- (2) whether the Judiciary will consider increasing the jurisdiction of the SCT from \$75,000 to \$100,000? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

- (1) As the Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its operating resources to support the services at different levels of court having regard to operational needs, it does not maintain the breakdown of the expenditure incurred exclusively for coping with the services provided by the Small Claims Tribunal (SCT).

The establishment, number of posts, ranks and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff of the SCT for the past three years (i.e. 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) are as follows:

Tribunal	Establish- ment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision* (\$ million)		
			2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Small Claims Tribunal	80	1 – Principal Adjudicator	55.0	57.2	58.9
		11 – Adjudicator			
		21 – Judicial Clerk grade staff			
		46 – Clerical staff			
		1 – Office Assistant			

* Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible JJOs and civil service support staff.

- (2) The jurisdictional limit of SCT was increased from \$50,000 to \$75,000 with effect from 3 December 2018. The increase was made having regard to a comprehensive and objective analysis taking into account a host of factors, including the need to enhance access to justice, impact on demand for and operation of SCT's services, changes in economic indicators as well as stakeholders' views. Since then, the Judiciary has been closely monitoring the caseload of SCT.

The Judiciary observed that, for statistics of cases filed to SCT with claim amount exceeding \$50,000, arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on court operations, the annual number of such cases in 2020 to 2022 was about 40% to 45% less than that in 2019. While the caseload in 2023 and 2024 showed an increase, the level was still around 25% and 32% lower, respectively, than that in 2019.

Since any further adjustment of the jurisdictional limit of the SCT would have a significant impact on its operation and caseload, hence delivery of its service to court users, the Judiciary considers it more prudent to collate more data over a longer time period to facilitate a clearer assessment of the need for any further changes to the jurisdictional limit.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA023

(Question Serial No. 2101)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

One of the most important features of Hong Kong's legal system is trial by jury, i.e. trial in court by fellow members of the community of the person on trial. At present, Hong Kong residents who meet certain requirements are eligible to serve as jurors. In this connection, please inform this Council of the following:

1. Are jurors necessarily Hong Kong permanent residents? Are foreign nationals and foreign domestic helpers coming to work in Hong Kong and holding identity cards also eligible to serve as jurors?
2. What was the total number of people who were selected to be included in the list of jurors in each of the past 3 years? How many of them were Hong Kong permanent residents and how many were Hong Kong residents?
3. In each of the past 3 years, how many applications for exemption from jury service were made on the ground of insufficient knowledge of the language in which the hearings were to be conducted? How many of them were granted?
4. If a person refuses to serve as a juror when the jury is empanelled or refuses to attend the hearing upon being summoned, will this incur extra costs to the Judiciary? If there is an excessive number of non-permanent residents refusing to serve, resulting in a substantial increase in extra costs to the Judiciary, what strategies does the Judiciary have to cope with it?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

1. In accordance with section 7(1) of the Jury Ordinance (Cap. 3) (the Ordinance), as soon as it appears to the Commissioner of Registration (the Commissioner) (i.e. Director of Immigration) that any person is qualified to serve as a juror under section 4 and not

exempt from service as a juror under section 5¹, the Commissioner will send his/her personal particulars to the Registrar of the High Court (the Registrar) for the serving of a notice on the person, notifying him/her that his/her name will be added to the list of jurors.

Section 4(1) of the Ordinance stipulates that a person who has reached 21 years of age, but not 65 years of age, and is a resident of Hong Kong is, except as provided by the Ordinance, liable to serve as a juror if he/she –

- (a) is of a sound mind and not afflicted by blindness, deafness or other disability preventing the person from serving as a juror;
- (b) is of good character, and
- (c) has a sufficient knowledge of the language in which the proceedings are to be conducted to be able to understand the proceedings.

2. Based on the personal particulars provided by the Commissioner, a total of around 430 000 notices were issued to the persons who appeared to be qualified to serve as a juror under the Ordinance, notifying them that their names would be added to the list of jurors during 2022 to 2024 –

Year	Number of notices issued
2022	213 064*
2023	185 779*
2024	30 337

* A substantial number of notices were issued due to a surge in the number of personal particulars of persons provided by the Commissioner.

The personal particulars provided by the Commissioner do not specify whether the persons are permanent residents or non-permanent residents of Hong Kong.

3. Any person upon whom a notice or summons has been served considers that he/she does not qualify to serve as a juror under section 4 or is exempt from service as a juror under section 5 of the Ordinance, he/she shall within the relevant timeframes stipulated in the Ordinance notify the Registrar in writing to that effect stating the grounds upon which he/she claims exemption. Furthermore, section 4(2) of the Ordinance also stipulates that in a trial before a jury, the court or a coroner may, on the court or the coroner's own motion or on the application of the Registrar or of any interested party, discharge any person summoned to serve as a juror who is unable to satisfy the court or the coroner that the person's knowledge of the language in which the proceedings are to be conducted is sufficient to enable the person to understand the proceedings. The Judiciary does not maintain statistics on the number of applications for exemption from jury service. Operational experience indicates that such applications represent an insignificantly small percentage of the total number of persons summoned for jury service.

¹ Section 5 of the Ordinance provides a list of categories of persons who are exempted from jury service (https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap3?xpid=ID_1438402956556_001).

4. Given the large number of persons summoned for jury service, the court has not come across any occasion where the number of persons summoned turned out to be insufficient for forming juries for the relevant trials. There is no negative impact or cost implication on court operations arising from individual persons' applications for exemption from jury service.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA024

(Question Serial No. 3023)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The abuse of non-refoulement claims by “bogus refugees” to remain in Hong Kong not only has a serious impact on the law and order of the society but it also costs the Government more than \$1 billion in public funds each year to address this issue. Over the past 12 years, the relevant expenditure has exceeded \$10 billion. Will the Government answer the following questions?

What is the expenditure allocated by the Judiciary to judges designated for handling “bogus refugees” cases? What is the current backlog of non-refoulement claims? How long is it expected to take to dispose of these cases? Can expediting the process help reduce expenditure?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

Among 17 893 leave applications to apply for judicial review relating to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance of the High Court, 9 857 cases were disposed of as at 31 January 2025. Leave was granted in 437 cases, representing 4.4% of the cases disposed.

The Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its resources at different levels of court for handling non-refoulement claim related cases as expeditiously as reasonably practicable. On top of the judges and supporting staff in the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal who are handling these cases alongside all other cases on a rotational or day-to-day basis, the Judiciary has been engaging Deputy Judges in the Court of First Instance of the High Court and contract supporting staff to assist in handling non-refoulement claim related cases. Currently, six retired judges have been appointed as Deputy Judges to assist in processing these cases.

To further expedite the disposal of backlog and incoming non-refoulement claim related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which eligible private practitioners from the legal sector are appointed as Deputy Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims. The Judiciary is initially planning to appoint around ten such special Deputy Judges, each for a specified period of time. Three short-term appointments have been made so far and more appointments are expected to be made in due course. The estimated expenditure for engaging these Deputy Judges under the special scheme in 2025-26 is \$4.0 million.

Furthermore, the administrative procedures and presentation of the judgment/decision notice have been suitably streamlined so as to expedite the processing of cases by judges. The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the progress and flexibly deploy resources in response to operational needs, with a view to enhancing the efficiency in handling non-refoulement claim related cases as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**JA025****(Question Serial No. 3043)**Head: (80) JudiciarySubhead (No. & title): (-)Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory FunctionsControlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)Director of Bureau: Not applicableQuestion:

The Judiciary has been conducting remote hearings for civil proceedings at different levels of court where appropriate since April 2020. Please inform this Council of the following:

In the past 3 years,

1. the total number of cases for which remote hearings were conducted by the Judiciary at all levels of court.
2. the types and numbers of cases for which remote hearings were conducted.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

(1) & (2)

The total number of remote hearings conducted at various levels of court from 2022 to 2024 is 1 054. The numbers and types of these proceedings conducted at various levels of court are tabulated by year as follows:

2022

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	7	4	0
High Court	262	0	60
District Court	27	0	143
Family Court	54	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	8	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	38	Not applicable	0
Total	396	4	203

2023

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	3	2	0
High Court	4	0	66
District Court	0	0	0
Family Court	30	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	1	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	12	Not applicable	0
Total	50	2	66

2024

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	2	1	0
High Court	3	0	111
District Court	1	0	173
Family Court	22	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	3	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	17	Not applicable	0
Total	48	1	284

Notes:

- (1) The above figures include hearings where Judges and/or Judicial Officers and/or one or more parties were physically absent from the court during the proceedings.
- (2) All phone hearings conducted were for civil proceedings.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**JA026****(Question Serial No. 3525)**Head: (80) JudiciarySubhead (No. & title): (-)Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory FunctionsControlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)Director of Bureau: Not applicableQuestion:

The court waiting times at various levels of court in Hong Kong are long and they are even longer for civil and family cases. In this connection, please inform this Council of the following information:

- (a) In a tabulated form, the annual average number of cases handled by each judge at each level of court in the past 3 years. How does the Administration quantify the objective of “expediting the handling”, for example by providing the percentage of waiting times shortened?
- (b) It is the Administration’s plan to engage additional judges or court support staff. What are the expenditures and the size of staffing establishment?
- (c) E-litigation systems (e.g. online filing, virtual hearings, and others) have been widely promoted internationally. What is the latest progress in Hong Kong? Has the Administration earmarked any provision for the development of relevant digitisation tools?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Tsz-wing, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 54)

Reply:

- (a) The number of cases filed to various levels of court for the past three years from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Levels of Court	2022	2023	2024
Court of Final Appeal			
application for leave to appeal	728	395	229
appeals	18	23	24
miscellaneous proceedings	0	0	0

Levels of Court	2022	2023	2024
Court of Appeal of the High Court			
criminal appeals	249	251	277
civil appeals	501	439	577
miscellaneous proceedings	556	381	249
Court of First Instance of the High Court			
criminal jurisdiction			
criminal cases	223	446	452
confidential miscellaneous proceedings	883	749	698
miscellaneous proceedings (criminal)	637	882	1 012
appeals from Magistrates' Courts	460	496	506
civil jurisdiction	14 412	17 094	20 126
probate cases	23 006	26 298	28 335
Competition Tribunal	3	3	0
District Court			
criminal cases	1 193	1 331	1 623
civil cases	21 377	24 826	30 270
family cases	16 802	20 914	20 326
Lands Tribunal	3 998	4 739	5 281
Magistrates' Courts	383 512	386 776	379 547
Coroner's Court	131	195	138
Labour Tribunal	3 378	4 348	4 879
Small Claims Tribunal	41 514	52 304	57 454
Obscene Articles Tribunal	34	14	163

The Judiciary does not maintain statistics regarding the number of cases handled by each Judge and Judicial Officer (JJO). We reckon that the number of cases dealt with by a JJO at any given time does not reflect the full picture of his/her workload, as a complex trial lasting for months and a simple case with a hearing lasting for less than one hour are both counted as one case. Given the diversity in the types and complexity of cases at different levels of court, we do not consider it appropriate to adopt the overall average number of cases handled by each JJO as a reliable performance indicator.

The Judiciary has been maintaining and publishing statistics on average waiting times at various levels of court as the major quantifiable performance indicator. However, it should be noted that the court waiting times could be affected by a host of factors including the availability of JJOs, parties, legal practitioners and witnesses, and complexity of cases, etc., many of which are not fully controlled by the court.

In 2024, the Judiciary managed to handle an overall caseload (including quite a number of complex cases requiring longer processing times) which was comparable to that in 2023 and 2019, prior to the pandemic. In overall terms, the target average court waiting times for the majority of civil cases across different levels of court were generally met. There were also considerable improvements in the average waiting times for most criminal proceedings, except for certain types of criminal cases in the Court of First Instance (CFI) of the High Court (HC), where long trials of complex cases were heard. With the majority of the remaining cases related to 2019 anti-extradition amendment bill

incidents and national security being set down for trial in 2025, the Judiciary anticipates gradual and more substantial improvements to the court waiting times in the years ahead.

The Judiciary will nevertheless continue to take forward multiple measures to ensure all cases will be handled as expeditiously as possible within the target waiting times in each year, without compromising the due administration of justice.

- (b) In 2025-26, the Judiciary will have a total establishment of 227 directorate posts (comprising 12 directorate civil service posts and 215 posts for JJOs) and 1 841 non-directorate civil service posts.

In the past few years, the Judiciary has been launching open recruitment exercises for JJOs at more regular intervals. The latest round of open recruitment exercises for different levels of JJOs, starting from Judges of the CFI of the HC, were launched in November 2024. This will be followed by recruitment for District Judges and Permanent Magistrates some time in 2025. The Judiciary would continue to monitor the judicial manpower situation, and engage legal practitioners as deputy JJOs to help maintain the level of judicial manpower required at different levels of court.

As regards non-judicial manpower, the Judiciary has been arranging open recruitment exercises for various grades of support staff in 2025-26, including Judicial Clerk, Court Interpreter, Bailiff and Bailiff's Assistant grades with a view to ensuring adequate support for court services.

The required expenditure has been included in the provision of around \$1.68 billion on personal emoluments and personnel-related expenses which represents around 60% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26.

- (c) The Judiciary is committed to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court operations. We have been proceeding at full steam with the implementation of a series of major technology initiatives including the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), remote hearings, use of voice-to-text (VTT) technology, use of e-bundles at court hearings, etc. The latest progress of these initiatives is summarised below.

iCMS

As a major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan, the iCMS aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. It is being implemented by phases –

- (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and

- (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), the HC and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

Remote hearing

In line with the Judiciary's commitment to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court business, the Judiciary has been taking forward and promoting the use of remote hearing on an incremental basis from 2020. In 2021, the Judiciary introduced the browser-based video-conferencing option so that parties could use common web browsers and normal desktop or laptop computer devices to connect to the Judiciary's video-conferencing facilities. In 2022, the Judiciary further extended the remote hearing system to support the conduct of remote hearing outside court when access to court facilities was not allowed say due to public health or other reasons. With experience gained on the arrangement and conduct of remote hearing, the Judiciary has progressively been updating the information technology (IT)/audio-visual facilities and enhancing the IT systems with improved workflows for meeting new operational needs over the years. We have been further enhancing the IT systems for remote hearing to include new functions as and when required, such as remote signing of bail form by parties at the remote end.

The Courts (Remote Hearing) Ordinance has come into operation on 28 March 2025. It provides a clear legal basis for JJOs to order remote hearing at various levels of courts and tribunals where appropriate, having regard to all relevant factors, as well as the dual requirements of open justice and fair hearing. Specifically, it removes legal impediments to the general application of remote hearing to criminal proceedings and provides express provisions setting out how matters should be handled when a hearing is conducted remotely.

More than 2 100 remote hearings were conducted mostly on civil proceedings at various levels of court as from February 2020 to February 2025 and the experience has so far been positive. As part of the Judiciary's on-going efforts to make wider use of technology in court operations both for enhancing efficiency and access to justice for court users, the Judiciary will endeavour to conduct remote hearings more often where circumstances allow without compromising on the interests of justice, in accordance with the above Ordinance.

Use of VTT technology

The Judiciary has been actively exploring the use of VTT technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings in the past two years. We have been developing our own VTT system using VTT software products in the market with a view to enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Following rounds of model training for over ten months using the audio recordings of court hearings and pieces of legislation/ordinances as well as pilot runs in real court cases with the participation of JJOs, the accuracy rates of our VTT system have gradually been improved from around 60% initially to around 80%. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the

VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The feedback from JJOs has so far been positive. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the HC Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary is planning to deploy the use of VTT-generated texts for facilitating transcript production in an incremental manner. Given that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the CFA Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025, we will be launching a pilot arrangement of producing transcripts using texts generated by the Judiciary's VTT system for selected court hearings in the CFA Building and HC Building by including the relevant requirements in the new contracts for the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services from November 2025. We will continue to keep abreast of developments of the VTT technology (including different AI engines behind such technology) and explore new modes of operation with a view to enhancing the overall efficiency of transcription work.

Use of e-bundles at court hearings

The Judiciary started using e-bundles in the CFI and the Court of Appeal of the HC in 2017 and extended the arrangement to hearings for suitable DC civil cases since December 2020. From December 2020 to February 2025, a total of 152 e-bundle hearings were conducted and most of these hearings are related to CFI civil trials (e.g. hearings related to companies, winding-up and bankruptcy matters). A practice direction was issued to mandate the use of e-bundles for cases of the commercial list at the CFI starting from May 2022. Another practice direction for the companies and bankruptcy list came into effect in July 2023. The feedback from users has generally been positive. Taking into account operational experience, the Judiciary will encourage more use of e-bundles at court hearings in the near future.

The Judiciary has been deploying the required manpower and financial resources on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for implementing various initiatives involving the use of technology which seek to enhance the efficiency in court operations on an on-going basis. In 2025-26, the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of all ICT initiatives is around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary. The average annual increase in the past five years is around 9%.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA027

(Question Serial No. 0241)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Stage 2 of Phase I of the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) has been implemented at other levels of court since mid-2024. In this regard, please provide the following information:

1. What are the take-up rates? What is the number of new cases initiated under iCMS in 2024?
2. What is the number of registered accounts under iCMS to date? Has it reached the Judiciary's expected target number of users? If not, what is this year's expenditure for promotion and publicity of iCMS?
3. What types of services have been used via iCMS since its implementation? What are their respective take-up rates?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 101)

Reply:

The Judiciary is steaming ahead with the implementation of the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), the major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan. It aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. The iCMS is being implemented by phases –

- (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and

- (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal, the High Court and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

Utilisation

As at 28 February 2025, a total of 562 court users (including 441 law firms, representing about 48% of law firms registered with the Law Society of Hong Kong) have registered for accounts under the iCMS. Around 509 000 new cases have been initiated under the iCMS, representing about 65% of the total number of relevant new cases during the period. In 2024 alone, about 326 000 new cases were initiated under the iCMS. Separately, court users have filed some 839 000 documents, conducted about 11 000 inspections of documents and made about 24 000 payment transactions via the iCMS. The take-up rate is expected to rise progressively following the continued promotion of the iCMS and substantially upon the imposition of mandatory use by all legally represented litigants as from 2026. For illustration, the percentage of new cases initiated under the iCMS has been increased from about 13% as at 31 January 2023, to about 40% as at 31 January 2024, and then to about 65% as at 28 February 2025.

Promotion

To incentivise registration under the iCMS during the initial years, court users are offered a fee concession of 20% for five years and three years for case types implemented under the first and second phases respectively, on fee items related to the electronic handling of court documents. Besides, the Judiciary has been implementing a series of promotion and facilitation measures to raise the awareness of the iCMS and help potential users familiarise with handling court businesses in the electronic mode, as set out below –

- (i) providing information on the e-services offered by the iCMS on a dedicated webpage, which was launched in April 2022 and updated from time to time;
- (ii) operating an iCMS Help Centre and enquiry/technical hotlines to provide law firms and litigants-in-person with advice and assistance on the registration and use of electronic litigation services under the iCMS gratis;
- (iii) conducting briefings and demonstration sessions as from 2022. A total of 62 briefing-cum-hands-on demonstration sessions for law firms were conducted from January 2023 to February 2025 with the assistance of the Law Society of Hong Kong. Around 800 representatives from some 360 law firms participated in the sessions, and all the sessions were well received;
- (iv) inviting key external stakeholders (including government departments, public organisations, legal professional bodies and law firms) to take part in pilot runs so as to familiarise with the electronic workflow and the iCMS functions before rolling out the iCMS external functions of relevant case types of different court levels;
- (v) introducing Deposit Account as an additional electronic payment option for the iCMS Organisation Account users in mid-2025 so that a legal firm can make non-interest

bearing prepayments (and subsequent top-ups as required) at or above a specified minimum amount for settling all subsequent payments for transactions under the iCMS without the hassle of paying for each individual transaction; and

- (vi) organising in conjunction with the Law Society of Hong Kong a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) briefing session for members of the legal professional body in October 2024 for a walkthrough on key iCMS external functions (including registration, electronic filing, electronic inspection and electronic payment functions). CPD points are awarded to a total of about 500 attendees joining the face-to-face briefing session or via webinar.

To prepare for the mandatory requirement for use of the iCMS on the legal profession, we are planning to put in place a new measure to induce migration to the electronic mode upon the extension of the iCMS external functions to selected case types of the High Court in mid-2025. The Judiciary will stipulate in the Practice Direction that a party who files or submits a document in the conventional mode is required to provide the Court with an electronic copy of the document in USB mass storage device or portable hard disk with USB interface at the same time of filing or submission at the court registry. This new arrangement is expected to incentivise law firms to switch from the conventional mode to the iCMS as soon as possible for enjoying the convenience of conducting e-filing anytime and anywhere. We will also continue our utmost efforts in promoting the registration and usage of the iCMS with a view to encouraging migration to the electronic mode.

As the promotion and publicity of the iCMS are part and parcel of the duties of in-house staff responsible for the development and management of technology initiatives of the Judiciary Administration, there is no breakdown on the expenditure incurred in the organisation of such promotion and publicity activities. The relevant expenditure is included in the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of the Judiciary's Information and Communications Technology initiatives of around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary in 2025-26.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA028

(Question Serial No. 2767)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

1. Please provide the number of applications for leave to judicial review, the number of judicial reviews, the number of appeals against judicial review decisions and the number of final appeals in the past 3 years. Among them, what is the number of non-refoulement claim cases? What are the number of cases in which leave has been granted and the time spent on processing them? How many of these cases were legally aided? What is the estimated time required for disposing of the backlog of judicial review cases involving non-refoulement claims?
2. What are the various expenses and the total expenses incurred from the handling of applications for leave to judicial review, judicial reviews, appeals against judicial review decisions and final appeals, engagement of briefed-out counsel and solicitors, legal aid and all related legal proceedings involving non-refoulement claims?
3. Will the Judiciary increase the manpower and explore means to compress the procedures in order to deal with the backlog of judicial review cases? If yes, what are the details and the expenditures. If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

The statistics maintained by the Judiciary that are relevant to the question for the past three years from 2022 to 2024 are as follows:

Judicial Review Cases	2022	2023	2024
<i>Court of First Instance of the High Court</i>			
(a) No. of leave applications filed	1 545	2 191	2 549
(b) No. of leave applications filed relating to non-refoulement claims	1 445	2 087	2 418
(c) No. of leave applications with leave granted	25	22	23
(d) Average processing time (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision) ¹	247 days	204 days	99 days
(e) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed	77	43	49
(f) No. of substantive judicial review cases filed relating to non-refoulement claims	64	35	32
<i>Court of Appeal of the High Court</i>			
(g) No. of appeals against refusal of leave filed	297	264	338
(h) No. of appeals against refusal of leave filed relating to non-refoulement claims	279	246	314
(i) No. of appeals against judicial review decisions filed	11	1	6
(j) No. of appeals against judicial review decisions filed relating to non-refoulement claims	6	0	0
<i>Court of Final Appeal</i>			
(k) No. of applications for leave to appeal (civil) filed ²	670	352	186
(l) No. of applications for leave to appeal (civil) filed relating to non-refoulement claims	603	307	147
(m) No. of substantive appeals (civil) filed ²	14	10	12
(n) No. of substantive appeal (civil) filed relating to non-refoulement claims	0	0	0

Remarks:

¹ The Judiciary only maintains statistics on the average processing time of leave applications at the Court of First Instance of the High Court and such statistics only take into account the number of leave applications with leave granted or leave refused as at the report generation date, but exclude those withdrawn or outstanding leave applications.

² The figures are total number of cases filed to the Court of Final Appeal which include non-judicial review cases.

³ The relevant statistics are live data which are subject to change depending on the date and time of preparation of the statistical information.

The Judiciary does not maintain the other requested statistics on judicial review cases.

The expenditure on handling legal proceedings relating to non-refoulement claims forms part of the general operating expenses of the Judiciary. The Judiciary has been flexibly deploying its resources for handling such cases at different levels of court having regard to operational needs. The relevant expenditure includes the salary and related expenses as well as other operating expenses of judges and supporting staff in the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal who are handling these cases alongside all other cases on a rotational or day-to-day basis ^{Note}. The Judiciary does not maintain the breakdown of operating expenses incurred exclusively for coping with cases relating to non-refoulement claims.

The Judiciary has also been engaging Deputy Judges in the Court of First Instance of the High Court and contract supporting staff to assist in handling non-refoulement claim related cases. Currently, six retired judges have been appointed as Deputy Judges to assist in handling these cases. The additional expenditure in the past five years for such extra manpower is as follows:

2020-21 (\$ million)	2021-22 (\$ million)	2022-23 (\$ million)	2023-24 (\$ million)	2024-25 (\$ million)
6.5	13.3	10.0	10.1	14.2

Note: The breakdown of expenditure of judges in the Court of Appeal of the High Court and Court of Final Appeal is not available as the number of appeal cases listed for their disposal in a year hinges on multiple varying factors.

To further expedite the disposal of backlog and incoming non-refoulement claim related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which eligible private practitioners from the legal sector are appointed as Deputy Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims. The Judiciary is initially planning to appoint around ten such special Deputy Judges, each for a specified period of time. Three short-term appointments have been made so far and more appointments are expected to be made in due course. The estimated expenditure for engaging these Deputy Judges under the special scheme in 2025-26 is \$4.0 million.

Furthermore, the administrative procedures and presentation of the judgment/decision notice have been suitably streamlined so as to expedite the processing of cases by judges. The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the progress and flexibly deploy resources in response to operational needs, with a view to enhancing the efficiency in handling non-refoulement claim related cases as far as practicable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA029

(Question Serial No. 2645)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

What is the breakdown of the expenditures incurred by the Judiciary in the past 10 years in hearing judicial reviews of matters involving sexual minorities?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

Judicial review (JR) cases are handled by the Court of First Instance (CFI) and the Court of Appeal of the High Court (CA), as well as the Court of Final Appeal (CFA). The total number of substantive JR cases other than those relating to non-refoulement claims filed at the CFI and the CA over the past three years (from 2022 to 2024) amount to 38 and 12 respectively while the total number of substantive civil appeal cases other than those relating to non-refoulement claims filed at the CFA (which includes non-JR cases) during the same period is 36^{note}. Apart from those related to non-refoulement claims, the Judiciary does not have statistical breakdown on other JR cases including those involving sexual minorities, as well as information on the expenditure incurred on handling JR cases involving sexual minorities.

^{Note:} Breakdown between JR and non-JR cases is not readily available.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**JA030****(Question Serial No. 3749)**Head: (80) JudiciarySubhead (No. & title): (-)Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory FunctionsControlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)Director of Bureau: Not applicableQuestion:

As victims testifying in sexual offence cases are subject to extreme pressure and potential reopening of old wounds, the court may take a number of protective measures. Please provide this Council with the position of sexual offence trials, applications for various protective measures and their approval in the past 6 years:

1. Position of the use of protective measures in court

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of sexual offence trials involving adult victims						
No. of sexual offence trials involving mentally incapacitated victims						
No. of sexual offence trials involving underage victims						

2. Overall position of applications for protective measures in court at sexual offence trials:

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved
Provision of Screens for Sexual Offence Cases												
Use of Special Passage-ways for Entering/ Leaving the Court												
Giving of Evidence by Live Television Link												
Company of Support Persons												

3. Position of applications for protective measures in court at sexual offence trials involving adult victims:

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved
Provision of Screens for Sexual Offence Cases												
Use of Special Passage-ways for Entering/ Leaving the Court												
Giving of Evidence by Live Television Link												
Company of Support Persons												

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

In accordance with Practice Directions 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.10 issued by the Judiciary, vulnerable witnesses may apply to the court for appropriate protective measures to reduce their fear when appearing in the court, including using protective screens and special passageways from the entrance of a court building to the relevant courtroom, giving evidence by live television link, and/or being accompanied by a support person.

The number of sexual offence trials and the overall position of applications for protective measures during sexual offence trials in court from 2019 to 2024 are set out as follows:

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
No. of sexual offence trials	229		130		187		174		193		210	
	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved	No. of Applications	No. of Applications approved
Using Protective Screens	109	109	74	74	78	78	101	101	103	103	122	121
Using Special Passage-ways for Entering/ Leaving the Courtroom	104	104	72	72	89	89	117	117	138	138	174	174
Giving Evidence by Live Television Link	60	60	45	45	72	72	82	82	110	110	99	99
Being accompanied by a Support Person	58	58	45	45	72	72	71	71	95	95	117	117

The Judiciary does not maintain statistical breakdown on the background of applicants (including age profile) using protective measures in relation to sexual offence trials.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA031

(Question Serial No. 1493)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (2) Support Services for Courts' Operation

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

Concerning the use of technology to enhance the efficiency of court services, please provide information on the following:

1. The number of cases handled by way of remote hearings at various levels of court and the relevant expenditures in each of the past 5 years;
2. The current number of registered users for various types of accounts in the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) and the number of cases handled via iCMS in the past 3 years;
3. The number, contents, and relevant expenditures of system upgrades and maintenance of iCMS each year since its launch.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. The numbers of remote hearings conducted at various levels of court from 2020 to 2024 are tabulated by year as follows:

2020

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities (from April 2020)		Phone hearings (from February 2020)
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	4	1	0
High Court	48	0	350
District Court	0	0	22
Family Court	10	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	0	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	0	Not applicable	0
Total	62	1	372

2021

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	3	6	0
High Court	99	0	342
District Court	0	0	134
Family Court	35	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	2	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	8	Not applicable	0
Total	147	6	476

2022

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	7	4	0
High Court	262	0	60
District Court	27	0	143
Family Court	54	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	8	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	38	Not applicable	0
Total	396	4	203

2023

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	3	2	0
High Court	4	0	66
District Court	0	0	0
Family Court	30	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	1	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	12	Not applicable	0
Total	50	2	66

2024

	Hearings using video-conferencing facilities		Phone hearings
	Civil proceedings	Criminal proceedings	
Court of Final Appeal	2	1	0
High Court	3	0	111
District Court	1	0	173
Family Court	22	Not applicable	0
Small Claims Tribunal	3	Not applicable	0
Labour Tribunal	17	Not applicable	0
Total	48	1	284

Notes:

- (i) The above figures include hearings where Judges and/or Judicial Officers and/or one or more parties were physically absent from the court during the proceedings.
- (ii) All phone hearings conducted were for civil proceedings.

The expenditures for installation of information technology (IT)/audio-visual (AV) facilities and support equipment, and carrying out related services in courtrooms and other office areas, including those required for supporting remote hearing, in the past five years are as follows:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
IT/AV related expenditure (\$ million)	3.2	15	24	30	36

2. The Judiciary is steaming ahead with the implementation of the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS), the major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan (ITSP). It aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. The iCMS is being implemented by phases –

- (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and
- (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal, the High Court and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

As at 28 February 2025, a total of 562 court users (including 441 law firms, representing about 48% of law firms registered with the Law Society of Hong Kong; all 37 law enforcement agencies; five government departments; 14 organisations; and 65 litigants in person) have registered for accounts under the iCMS. Around 509 000 new cases have been initiated under the iCMS, representing about 65% of the total number of relevant new cases during the period. Separately, court users have filed some 839 000 documents, conducted about 11 000 inspections of documents and made about 24 000 payment transactions via the iCMS. The take-up rate is expected to rise progressively following the continued promotion of the iCMS and substantially upon the imposition of mandatory use by all legally represented litigants as from 2026. For illustration, the percentage of new cases initiated under the iCMS has been increased from about 13% as at 31 January 2023, to about 40% as at 31 January 2024, and then to about 65% as at 28 February 2025.

The number of registered users of the iCMS and its utilisation in the past three years are tabulated below:

	As at 28 February 2023	As at 29 February 2024	As at 28 February 2025
Number of registered users	102	413	562
Number of new cases initiated under the iCMS	9 300	185 600	509 000
Number of documents filed via the iCMS	3 000	220 500	839 000
Number of inspections of documents conducted via the iCMS	1 900	6 300	11 000
Number of payment transactions made via the iCMS	2 300	13 000	24 000

3. The Judiciary has been deploying the required manpower and financial resources on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for implementing various initiatives involving the use of technology which seek to enhance the efficiency in court operations on an on-going basis. In 2025-26, the estimated recurrent expenditure on the planning and implementation of all ICT initiatives is around \$310 million which represents about 11% of the total estimated operating expenditure of the Judiciary. The average annual increase in the past five years is around 9%. This includes the estimated salaries and related costs of civil service staff of the Judiciary involved in both the development and implementation of the iCMS in 2025-26. Within this estimated expenditure provision, around \$60 million is estimated to be required for on-going support of the information systems implemented under the ITSP including the maintenance and support of the iCMS.

Since the iCMS is an on-going project which is being implemented at different court levels by phases, it involves an evolving and continual series of system upgrades and maintenance managed by the Judiciary's in-house ICT manpower on the basis of operational and technical requirements.

Within the funding commitment of around \$680 million for the ITSP, the actual expenditure incurred on the development of the iCMS, which includes the procurement of hardware, software and implementation services (covering IT professionals engaged on contract) in the past five years are:

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Expenditure (\$ million)	19.4	31.9	49.6	73.5	82.4

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

JA032

(Question Serial No. 1503)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

With respect to all levels of court and tribunals, will the Administration provide information on the following:

1. The current strength, establishment, salary expenditures by ranks and overall salary expenditures for Judges and Judicial Officers and support staff across various levels of court and tribunals;
2. The reasons why the average waiting times for the Court of Final Appeal, the Court of Appeal of the High Court, and the Court of First Instance of the High Court in 2025 will be mostly longer when compared with those in the past 2 years;
3. Regarding the Family Court, while it is estimated that the number of cases in 2025 will be comparable to that in 2023 and 2024, and the processing of dissolution of marriage cases on the Defended List only took 53 days and 42 days in 2023 and 2024 respectively, the target for 2025 has been set at 110 days. As for financial applications, while they only took 71 days in 2023 and 73 days in 2024, the target set for 2025 has been raised to 110-140 days. What are the reasons?
4. Regarding the Lands Tribunal, while it is estimated that the number of cases in 2025 will be comparable to that in 2023 and 2024, the target average waiting times for various types of cases in 2025 are substantially longer than those in 2023 and 2024. What are the reasons?
5. For each of the past 5 years, the number and details of the new technologies adopted by the Judiciary in enhancing the efficiency of courts and tribunals, the time so shortened and the manpower and expenditures so saved.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

- (1) The current establishment, number of posts and estimated salary provision for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) and support staff across various levels of courts and tribunals are as follows –

Tribunal/ Court	Establishment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision in 2024-25* (\$ million)
Court of Final Appeal	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal 3 – Judge of the Court of Final Appeal 6 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 6 – Clerical staff 6 – Secretarial staff 1 – Workman II 	29.5
High Court (Including Competition Tribunal)	350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Chief Judge of the High Court 14 – Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court 34 – Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court 1 – Registrar, High Court 4 – Senior Deputy Registrar, High Court 10 – Deputy Registrar, High Court 112 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 162 – Clerical staff 4 – Secretarial staff 8 – Workman II 	376.7
District Court	224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Chief District Judge 32 – District Judge 1 – Registrar, District Court 8 – Deputy Registrar, District Court 71 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 2 – Accounting Officer grade 93 – Clerical staff 5 – Secretarial staff 11 – Workman II 	195.8
Family Court #	63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Principal Family Court Judge 7 – District Judge 26 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 23 – Clerical staff 1 – Secretarial staff 5 – Workman II 	49.0

Tribunal/ Court	Establishment	Existing number of posts	Estimated salary provision in 2024-25* (\$ million)
Lands Tribunal	31	<div> 3 – District Judge 2 – Member 8 – Judicial Clerk grade Staff 17 – Clerical Staff 1 – Office Assistant </div>	25.6
Magistrates’ Courts	360	<div> 1 – Chief Magistrate 9 – Principal Magistrate 52 – Magistrate 14 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 2 – Accounting Officer grade 268 – Clerical staff 8 – Secretarial staff 6 – Workman II </div>	244.3
Labour Tribunal	91	<div> 1 – Principal Presiding Officer 8 – Presiding Officer 14 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 15 – Tribunal Officer 42 – Clerical staff 5 – Secretarial staff 2 – Office Assistant 4 – Workman II </div>	63.0
Small Claims Tribunal	80	<div> 1 – Principal Adjudicator 11 – Adjudicator 21 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 46 – Clerical staff 1 – Office Assistant </div>	58.9
Obscene Articles Tribunal	7	<div> 2 – Magistrates 5 – Clerical staff </div>	5.9
Coroner’s Court	14	<div> 3 – Coroner 1 – Judicial Clerk grade staff 8 – Clerical staff 1 – Secretarial staff 1 – Workman II </div>	10.8

* Estimated on the basis of prevailing annual salaries at mid-point, excluding fringe benefits and allowances claimable by eligible JJOs and civil service support staff.

Judicial Officers serving as Family Masters in the Family Court have been deployed from Magistrates’ Courts since October 2023 and the relevant posts for Family Masters (six in number as at mid-March 2025) are not included in the above establishment table.

- (2) - (4) The target average waiting time for each specific case type at different levels of court (including the Family Court and the Lands Tribunal) has been set through a review and consultation mechanism with reference to a host of factors relevant to the majority of cases in each case type over a reasonable period of time. These include provisions in the relevant ordinances or court rules in respect of that case type, the statistics on waiting time, caseload and complexity of cases, the time required by parties to prepare their cases, and the time required by the court or tribunal to process the cases as well as views from stakeholders and court users.

The actual waiting times for different case types in one or two years will invariably be contingent upon the caseload and complexity of the cases received and other circumstantial factors such as manpower resources in the relevant years. They may not necessarily represent the general trend figures which are considered prudent and acceptable performance targets over a reasonable period of time. The Judiciary will nevertheless continue to ensure all cases will be handled as expeditiously as possible within the target waiting times in each year, without compromising the due administration of justice. We will also closely monitor the situation and review the targets as and when appropriate.

The average waiting times for the Court of Final Appeal, the Court of Appeal of the High Court (CA), and the Court of First Instance of the High Court (CFI) in 2024 are generally comparable to those in the past two years (i.e. 2022 and 2023). The overall target average waiting times for civil proceedings have generally been met. There has been notable improvement at the CA where the average waiting time for civil cases has been reduced from 81 days in 2022 to 66 days in 2024. At the CFI level, while improvement was recorded for the average waiting time for appeal cases from the Magistrates' Courts (reduced from 160 days in 2022 to 131 days in 2024), the average waiting time for other criminal proceedings remained long in 2024. This is mainly due to the need for priority handling of cases relating to the 2019 anti-extradition amendment bill incidents and national security (NS cases), as well as more acute pressure on judicial resources arising from the requirement to field three criminal judges to handle each NS case.

- (5) The Judiciary is committed to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court operations. We have been proceeding at full steam with the implementation of a series of major technology initiatives including the integrated Court Case Management System, remote hearings, use of voice-to-text technology, use of e-bundles at court hearings, etc. The latest progress of these initiatives is set out at **Annex**.

integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS)

As a major initiative under the Information Technology Strategy Plan, the iCMS aims at enabling the handling of court-related documents and payments electronically across various court levels. It is being implemented by phases –

- (i) under the first phase, the iCMS has been implemented in the District Court (DC) and the Magistrates' Courts (MCs) since May and December 2022 respectively. The electronic mode can currently be used for personal injuries actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the DC, as well as summons cases in the MCs; and
- (ii) under the second phase, the iCMS has been extended to cover bulk claim cases of the Small Claims Tribunal starting from October 2024. It is the Judiciary's plan to extend the use of the iCMS to the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), the High Court (HC) and the non-Summons Courts of the MCs incrementally from mid-2025.

Following the full implementation of the iCMS for different levels of court, it is anticipated that more court users will make use of the iCMS to conduct electronic filing of documents. This will bring about reduction in paper storage accommodation costs for paper files in Judiciary premises and savings in manpower resources arising from streamlining of work processes in the longer term. As the iCMS has yet been fully implemented at all levels of court, and it remains only an option, we have yet to realise the above benefits in substantial terms. Provision has been made in the operating expenditure of the Judiciary for extra manpower and related resources to be expended during the initial implementation and transitional phases for system development, technical and administrative support, change management and training, as well as promotion and publicity. We will monitor the effectiveness of the iCMS and consider how best to assess the savings to be achieved after the iCMS has been fully implemented and made mandatory for all legally represented litigants, taking into account operational experience.

Remote hearing

In line with the Judiciary's commitment to making greater use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of court business, the Judiciary has been taking forward and promoting the use of remote hearing on an incremental basis from 2020. In 2021, the Judiciary introduced the browser-based video-conferencing option so that parties could use common web browsers and normal desktop or laptop computer devices to connect to the Judiciary's video-conferencing facilities. In 2022, the Judiciary further extended the remote hearing system to support the conduct of remote hearing outside court when access to court facilities was not allowed say due to public health or other reasons. With experience gained on the arrangement and conduct of remote hearing, the Judiciary has progressively been updating the information technology (IT)/audio-visual facilities and enhancing the IT systems with improved workflows for meeting new operational needs over the years. We have been further enhancing the IT systems for remote

hearing to include new functions as and when required, such as remote signing of bail form by parties at the remote end.

The Courts (Remote Hearing) Ordinance has come into operation on 28 March 2025. It provides a clear legal basis for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) to order remote hearing at various levels of courts and tribunals where appropriate, having regard to all relevant factors, as well as the dual requirements of open justice and fair hearing. Specifically, it removes legal impediments to the general application of remote hearing to criminal proceedings and provides express provisions setting out how matters should be handled when a hearing is conducted remotely.

More than 2 100 remote hearings were conducted mostly on civil proceedings at various levels of court as from February 2020 to February 2025 and the experience has so far been positive. As part of the Judiciary's on-going efforts to make wider use of technology in court operations both for enhancing efficiency and access to justice for court users, the Judiciary will endeavour to conduct remote hearings more often where circumstances allow without compromising on the interests of justice, in accordance with the above Ordinance.

Remote hearing saves the time and cost of participants such as parties, legal practitioners and witnesses within or outside Hong Kong in travelling to court buildings to attend court proceedings in person, thereby facilitating the listing of court proceedings. Remote hearing also enables the court to better tackle unforeseen situations where physical presence may not be possible (such as when social distancing measures are in place during a pandemic). It follows that all the remote hearings which were conducted during the past five years, particularly during the pandemic where physical hearings could not otherwise be held, contributed towards reducing the average waiting times for the relevant civil case types at different levels of court. However, given court waiting times could be affected by a host of factors including the availability of JJOs, parties, legal practitioners and witnesses, as well as the complexity of individual cases, it is not possible to produce empirical data on the time and cost saved by adopting more remote hearing in court proceedings.

Use of voice-to-text (VTT) technology

The Judiciary has been actively exploring the use of VTT technology (an artificial intelligence (AI) technology) for recording court proceedings in the past two years. We have been developing our own VTT system using VTT software products in the market with a view to enhancing the efficiency in recording court proceedings and production of transcripts where appropriate in the longer run. Following rounds of model training for over ten months using the audio recordings of court hearings and pieces of legislation/ordinances as well as pilot runs in real court cases with the participation of JJOs, the accuracy rates of our VTT system have gradually been improved from around 60% initially to around 80%. Since December 2023, the Judiciary has been using the VTT system for JJOs' real-time note-taking during court hearings. The feedback from JJOs has so far been positive. The VTT system has been enabled in 41 courtrooms of the HC Building and four courtrooms of the Wanchai Law Courts Building thus far. Setup work to enable the use of VTT in more courtrooms at different levels of court is in progress.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary is planning to deploy the use of VTT-generated texts for facilitating transcript production in an incremental manner. Given that the Judiciary's VTT system will be fully set up in the CFA Building and HC Building by the third quarter of 2025, we will be launching a pilot arrangement of producing transcripts using texts generated by the Judiciary's VTT system for selected court hearings in the CFA Building and HC Building by including the relevant requirements in the new contracts for the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services from November 2025. We will continue to keep abreast of developments of the VTT technology (including different AI engines behind such technology) and explore new modes of operation with a view to enhancing the overall efficiency of transcription work.

Use of e-bundles at court hearings

The Judiciary started using e-bundles in the Court of First Instance (CFI) and the Court of Appeal of the HC in 2017 and extended the arrangement to hearings for suitable DC civil cases since December 2020. From December 2020 to February 2025, a total of 152 e-bundle hearings were conducted and most of these hearings are related to CFI civil trials (e.g. hearings related to companies, winding-up and bankruptcy matters). A practice direction was issued to mandate the use of e-bundles for cases of the commercial list at the CFI starting from May 2022. Another practice direction for the companies and bankruptcy list came into effect in July 2023. The feedback from users has generally been positive. Apart from reducing paper usage, use of e-bundles will also speed up court hearings because of the quicker retrieval of and referral to the relevant pages/documents in the case bundles. Taking into account operational experience, the Judiciary will encourage more use of e-bundles at court hearings in the near future.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-JA001

(Question Serial No. S013)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

The reply of JA001 mentioned the relevant arrangements for engaging additional judicial manpower. In this connection, will the Judiciary inform this Council whether the current shortage of manpower in the High Court is attributable to, among other things, a lack of competitiveness stemming from the remuneration and fringe benefits offered by the High Court being lower than the average market level? Has the Judiciary conducted any survey to ascertain whether there is a disparity between the remuneration and fringe benefits offered by the High Court and the District Court for recruiting quality candidates and those offered by the market? If yes, what are the details? If the disparity is significant, will the Judiciary consider making adjustments, such as introducing a two-tier remuneration system, with one tier for the High Court and above, and another for the District Court and below, so as to attract and retain judicial talents of the High Court or above in a more targeted manner?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

The remuneration package (including pay and fringe benefits) for Judges and Judicial Officers (JJOs) are determined by the Government (specifically by the Chief Executive-in-Council) after considering the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Judicial Committee), an independent advisory body set up to advise and make recommendations on the salary and conditions of service of JJOs.

The judicial remuneration review mechanism comprises an annual review and a benchmark study conducted by the Judicial Committee on a regular basis. In discharging its function, the Judicial Committee is guided by the principle that judicial remuneration should be sufficient to attract and retain talents in the Judiciary.

In each annual review, the advice and recommendations given by the Judicial Committee on judicial remuneration will take into account the basket of factors approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council in May 2008, as well as the principle of judicial independence, the

position of the Judiciary and the findings of the benchmark study in the year applicable. The basket of factors include, inter alia, (i) the responsibility, working conditions and workload of judges vis-à-vis those of lawyers in private practice; (ii) recruitment and retention in the Judiciary; (iii) private sector pay levels and trends, etc.

The benchmark study seeks to ascertain the levels of earnings of legal practitioners in private practice in comparison with the salary of JJOs at corresponding levels. Any disparities over the relevant period would be reflected in the findings of the benchmark study.

During the past few years, measures were taken to attract more legal practitioners to join the judicial service and retaining experienced judicial manpower. In 2017, considerable enhancements were made to the conditions of service for JJOs, including housing benefits, medical and dental benefits, local education allowance, judicial dress allowance and transport service for leave travel. In 2019, with the enactment of the Judicial Officers (Extension of Retirement Age) (Amendment) Ordinance, the retirement ages of JJOs have generally been extended for five years

Apart from conducting open recruitment for JJOs at more frequent intervals and promoting the judicial career, the Judiciary will continue to review the remuneration package for JJOs with a view to putting forward refinement or improvement proposals (to the Government for consideration) with a view to facilitating the recruitment of new JJOs as well as retaining senior and experienced senior judges.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-JA002

(Question Serial No. S011)

Head: (80) Judiciary

Subhead (No. & title): (-)

Programme: (1) Courts, Tribunals and Various Statutory Functions

Controlling Officer: Judiciary Administrator (Ms Esther LEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Not applicable

Question:

1. In the written reply, the Judiciary mentioned that it did not maintain the other requested statistics on judicial review cases. However, in response to my follow-up at the Committee meeting, the Judiciary stated that the collection of data for a reply to be made would take time. In this connection, will the Judiciary please provide information in tabulated form on the administrative departments involved and the subject matters against which applications for leave to apply for judicial review, applications for judicial reviews, and appeals against judicial review decisions were lodged in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25).
2. In the written reply, the Judiciary mentioned that it did not maintain the other requested statistics on judicial review cases (including the statistics in relation to legal aid), whereas to my understanding, for cases dealt with by the Judiciary, whether or not the parties have been granted legal aid can at least be learnt from the judgments open for public inspection. In this connection, will the Judiciary please provide information in tabulated form on the numbers of judicial reviews that were granted legal aid, their case numbers, their outcomes, their paying parties of costs and the amounts, the administrative departments, the subject matters and the law firms concerned (alongside the counsel instructed) in each of the past 5 years (from 2020-21 to 2024-25).
3. In the written reply, the Judiciary mentioned that the estimated expenditure on the 10 Deputy Judges under the "special scheme" was merely \$4 million. How can the backlog of 8 500 applications for leave to apply for judicial review be handled efficiently? Will the Judiciary explore with the administrative agencies the possibility of establishing a dedicated tribunal for non-refoulement claims? If yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen

Reply:

- (1)&(2) According to the Judiciary's prevailing guidelines on records management, we have only been maintaining records required for meeting our operational needs and resource planning. In line with this principle, the Judiciary has not maintained comprehensive statistics on the administrative departments of the Government involved and the subject matters of judicial review cases other than those relating to non-refoulement claims.

Based on information available which may not be complete, we have compiled at Annex the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (other than those relating to non-refoulement claims) with breakdown by government bureaux/departments involved in the past three years from 2022 to 2024.

As regards the other requested information on judicial review cases, such information may be borne out of the documents which have been kept in the respective files of court cases. Anyone who wishes to inspect and obtain a copy of such documents may apply to the High Court in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Rules of the High Court.

- (3) To further expedite the disposal of backlog and incoming non-refoulement claim related cases, in February 2025, the Judiciary launched a special scheme under which an increasing number of eligible private practitioners from the legal sector will be appointed as Deputy Judges of the Court of First Instance of the High Court (Non-Refoulement Claims) exclusively for the purpose of handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims, in addition to engaging six retired judges as Deputy Judges for this purpose. Apart from engaging additional dedicated judicial resources to handle the cases, the Judiciary has also facilitated the wider adoption of paper disposal for suitable cases as appropriate, and streamlined administrative procedures and presentation of the judgment/decision notice through the use of technology. Operational experience indicates that the time required for processing of such cases could be shortened by half. With the special scheme and the enhancement measures in place, the Judiciary aims to dispose of at least around 2 300 to 2 400 cases each year.

As the Judiciary has already been deploying dedicated judicial recourses in the High Court for handling cases relating to non-refoulement claims through streamlined procedures, such cases are effectively being handled as if they are in a special court. We will closely monitor the progress of case disposals with a view to making further judicial appointments and improving operational procedures as appropriate.

**Number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review
(excluding non-refoulement claims) in the past three years**

(with breakdown by the government bureaux/departments involved
based on the names of the parties)

	2022	2023	2024
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government	2	2	1
Chief Executive's Office	9	6	1
Chief Executive in Council	1	0	1
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	1	0	0
Buildings Department	2	4	4
Civil Engineering and Development Department	0	1	1
Civil Service Bureau	5	1	3
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau	0	1	0
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau	0	1	0
Correctional Services Department	1	3	3
Customs and Excise Department	1	0	0
Department of Health	0	0	2
Department of Justice	9	9	5
Development Bureau	1	2	1
Education Bureau	1	0	2
Environment and Ecology Bureau	1	0	0
Environmental Protection Department	1	1	1
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	0	1	0
Fire Services Department	1	2	1
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	0	1	1
Health Bureau	8	0	2
Home Affairs Department	0	3	1
Home and Youth Affairs Bureau	0	0	2
Hong Kong Police Force	9	4	7
Housing Bureau	1	0	0
Housing Department	1	1	4
Immigration Department	17	8	14
Inland Revenue Department	3	0	2

	2022	2023	2024
Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau	1	0	0
Labour and Welfare Bureau	0	1	0
Labour Department	1	0	0
Land Registry	0	1	0
Lands Department	4	11	4
Legal Aid Department	3	5	8
Office of the Communications Authority	0	1	0
Official Receiver's Office	1	1	0
Radio Television Hong Kong	1	0	0
Registration and Electoral Office	0	2	0
Security Bureau	9	4	4
Social Welfare Department	1	0	0
Transport and Logistics Bureau	0	1	0
Transport Department	0	2	1
Total	96	80	76

Note:

The total number above does not tally with the caseload of a particular year because –

- (a) these statistics are compiled manually based on information available which may not be complete; and
- (b) the number of parties which are government bureaux/departments involved in a case varies and some applications do not have any government bureau/department involved.

- End -