

Government committed to sports facilities provision and upgrade

In response to enquiries on a media report on the Government's provision of sports facilities in the past decade, a spokesman for the Home Affairs Bureau today (September 30) said as follows:

The Government has been undertaking a number of sports facilities projects over the past 10 years, including nine sports centres in Stanley, Kwun Tong, Tai Kok Tsui, Tseung Kwan O, North District, Tai Po, Ma On Shan, Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. More recently, Phase II of Ma On Shan Sports Ground, Stanley Main Beach Water Sports Centre and Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground have been completed.

Back then (in 1999) when bidding for the right to host the 2006 Asian Games, the Government mentioned "projects under planning or consideration" since the venues had to meet the standards for the Asian Games should Hong Kong succeed in bidding the right. The task was to install temporary facilities or seats as far as practicable to meet demands so as to avoid wastage after the events were over.

Ma On Shan Sports Ground and Sports Centre

The sports ground was already in place when Hong Kong bid to host the 2006 Asian Games. The plan at that time was to build extra seats if Hong Kong succeeded in the bidding. As the bid turned out to be unsuccessful, it became natural that no extra seats would be required.

Besides, in the bid document, the proposed capacity for the Ma On Shan Sports Centre was 3 000 seats. The centre has now 1 000 fixed seats and 500 folded seats, and can expand the capacity for 4 000 spectators if needed. It allows flexibility to suit different circumstances.

Sai Tso Wan, Kwun Tong

The Government's initial plan had been to build a baseball and softball pitch. Though the bid to host the 2006 Asian Games was unsuccessful, the Government constructed the Sai Tso Wan Recreation Ground as planned. Due to site and layout limitations of the venue, the most feasible option meeting demands was to build a multi-purpose grass pitch primarily for baseball use. We at the same time built more sports facilities there, including an 11-a-side football pitch, a jogging track, a

children's playground and leisure facilities. Sai Tso Wan's usage rate has been saturated since opening and it has become a major venue for Hong Kong baseball activities. It is also the training base for the Hong Kong Baseball Team as well as venue for international tournaments.

As for softball training and competitions, they are held at Hong Kong Softball Association's dedicated site in Tin Kwong Road. The sports ground at Shek Kip Mei Service Reservoir is open for softball and baseball use on Saturdays and Sundays.

Water sports facilities in Shing Mun River

As regards water sports activities in Shing Mun River, the Government has been supporting the Hong Kong, China Rowing Association, the Hong Kong Canoe Union and the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Association, via land provision and subsidies, to set up water sports centres on both sides of the river for matches and training.

Each year a number of local and international competitions were held there, including rowing events of the 2009 East Asian Games held recently. The organisers set up starting installation, buoy, distance markings, timers and other facilities only when competitions are held, which are removed when the events are over.

Hockey grounds, cycling tracks and venues for archery competitions

Hockey grounds in the Hong Kong Sports Institute and cycling tracks in the Kwai Chung Sports Ground, mentioned in the bid document for 2006 Asian Games, were not constructed as a result of Hong Kong not hosting the Games. However, with a view to supporting developments of hockey and cycling, the Government upgraded the facilities at the King's Park hockey grounds in 2008, and will provide an indoor velodrome that meets international standard in Area 45 of Tseung Kwan O, which is expected to be completed in mid-2013. Venues for archery competitions in Tai Hang Tung Recreation Ground have all along been planned as temporary facilities for the Asian Games.

Castle Peak (i.e. Pillar Point) Shooting Range

The Hong Kong Shooting Association (HKSA) suggested to the Government in June 2006 for running a self-financing shooting range. The Government has been assisting HKSA to carry out the proposal, and issued a land licence of 25 years to

HKSA in October 2008. In mid-2010, HKSA applied to the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation for a grant to construct the first phase of the shooting range. The application is being processed.

Ends/Thursday, September 30, 2010

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