

Opening remarks by STH at media session (with video)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session on the Shatin to Central Link project this afternoon (July 18):

MTRCL (MTR Corporation Limited) submitted two final reports relating to the Hung Hom Station Extension incident to the Government today. Both reports have been accepted by the Government and submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project.

MTRCL recommended in the reports a series of works and measures at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension in order to satisfy the relevant codes of practice and contract requirements. There will be long-term monitoring of the structure upon completion of the works tentatively in late 2020 or early 2021.

Taking into account the testing and trial run, the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section can only be fully commissioned before the end of 2021. The Government considers it necessary to partially commission the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section so that the public can enjoy the benefits of the new railway soonest. The Government accepted the arrangement recommended by MTRCL, which involves the commissioning of three new stations, namely Hin Keng Station, Diamond Hill Station Extension and Kai Tak Station. The section from Wu Kai Sha Station to Kai Tak Station is now officially named as Tuen Ma Line Phase 1, which is targeted for commissioning in the first quarter of 2020.

MTRCL will pay the costs associated with the Hung Hom Station Extension incident, including those relating to partial commissioning. The estimated costs are about \$2 billion. As for the total costs for the entire SCL project, the Government will seriously follow up with MTRCL with a view to coming up with a comprehensive solution.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illegally imported live birds (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (July 18) seized 123 suspected illegally imported live birds with an estimated market value of about \$300 at Lo Wu Control Point.

During Customs clearance for a 23-year-old incoming male passenger this afternoon, the batch of live birds was found in four bird cages inside two plastic bags he carried.

The case was handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for a follow-up investigation.

Under the Public Health (Animals and Birds) Regulations, it is an offence to import any bird unless it is accompanied by a valid health certificate. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$25,000.

Members of the public may report any suspected activities of illegal importing of live birds to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 17) detected two illicit cigarettes cases involving wheelchairs and seized about 15 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$40,000 and a duty potential of about \$28,000 at Lo Wu Control Point.

Customs officers intercepted an incoming male passenger on a wheelchair and a female passenger accompanying him yesterday. About 14 000 suspected illicit cigarettes were found in the handbags carried by them and rucksacks hung on the wheelchair. On the same day, Customs officers intercepted another incoming male passenger on a wheelchair and found about 1 000 suspected illicit cigarettes in his handbag.

The three persons were arrested for failing to declare dutiable cigarettes in excess of duty-free concessions to a Customs Officer.

The arrested persons are aged between 64 and 79. An investigation is ongoing.

Customs officers will stay vigilant on this smuggling modus operandi. Customs reminds members of the public that under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, and selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[HAD to open temporary night heat shelters](#)

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (July 18) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2835 1473.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –
Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –
Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –
Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate
Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 20 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For addresses of the community centres or community halls, please browse the following webpage:
www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

Composite Interest Rate: End of June 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (July 18) the composite interest rate at the end of June 2019. (Note 1)

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, increased by 11 basis points to 0.95 per cent at the end of June 2019, from 0.84 per cent at the end of May 2019 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The increase in composite interest rate reflected increases in the weighted funding cost for both deposits and interbank funds during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex). (Note 2)

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of June 2019 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website (www.hkma.gov.hk). The next data release is scheduled for August 19, 2019 and will provide the composite interest rate at the end of July 2019.

Note 1: The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest-rate-sensitive liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and all other liabilities that do not involve any formal payment of interest but the values of which are sensitive to interest rate movements (such as Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits) on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90 per cent of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.

Note 2: Since June 2019, the composite interest rate and weighted deposit rate have been calculated based on the new local "Interest rate risk in the banking book" (IRRBB) framework. As such, these figures are not strictly comparable with those of previous months.